

Starting secondary school: the experiences of adopted young people and their parents

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Abstract

Background: It is well established that, until recently, the educational needs of adopted and permanently placed young people have historically been ignored in both research and in national legislation. A large percentage of these individuals will have faced adverse early childhood experiences which can impact on their social and emotional development and engagement with learning. Whilst the transition to secondary school is considered a challenging time for all children and young people, this experience has the potential to be increasingly challenging for adopted young people owing to their possible social, emotional and academic difficulties. Although much research has been carried out concerning adopted pupils in education, the views and perspectives of adopted young people are often missing.

Current research: This small scale qualitative study utilised elements of a participatory design. Adopted young people in Year 9 of mainstream secondary school were involved in key decisions regarding the research question and data collection techniques. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with three adopted young people in Year 7 of mainstream secondary school and two adoptive parents to gather data on their experiences of starting secondary education. Transcripts were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Key findings and implications: Key themes which arose across Year 7 and parent participants included 'Anxiety', 'Managing the Self', 'Attachment' and 'Adoptive Identity' with the individual accounts being distinctive and subjective as a result of individual experiences. The study provides key implications for secondary schools to develop cultures which recognise and understand the possible needs of adopted young people as well as implement proactive forms of support. The importance of

building positive relationships between the home and school systems is also implicated. Owing to their role across both primary and secondary schools as well as with wider professional and community groups, Educational Psychologists are well-placed to enhance the support provided for adoptive families when beginning secondary education.

Keywords: adopted, educational experiences, secondary school, transition, educational psychology



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List of Abbreviations

ACE: Adverse Childhood Experience

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

AUK: Adoption UK

BPS: British Psychological Society

CAMHS: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CASP: Critical Appraisal Skills Programme

CYP: Children and Young People

DfE: Department for Education

DoH: Department of Health

DT: Designated Teacher

EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan

EP: Educational Psychologist

EPS: Educational Psychology Service

HCPC: Health and Care Professions Council

IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

KS2: Key Stage 2

LA: Local Authority

LAC: Looked-After Children

LSA: Learning Support Assistant

NICE: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

PACE: Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy

PAC-UK: The Agency for Adoption & Permanency Support

SEMH: Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disability

SENDCo: Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator

SSI: Semi-Structured Interview

TEP: Trainee Educational Psychologist

UEL: University of East London

UK: United Kingdom

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an introduction to the area of focus in the current research. It begins by defining the key concepts relevant to this study before exploring both the national and local contexts of the educational experiences and secondary transitional experiences of those children and young people (CYP) adopted from care. This chapter will also consider the researcher's position within the study before providing a rationale for the current research area.

1.2 Definitions of Terminology

1.2.1 Adopted Children and Young People

The term 'previously looked-after' is often used to refer to CYP who move out of the care system in the UK. Whilst this term refers to any child who has ceased to be looked-after by the local authority (LA) and may include the child returning to live with their birth family or moving to independent living, it also includes those who leave the care system under a permanence arrangement, namely an adoption order, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order (Children and Social Work Act, 2017). Between April 2018 and March 2019, of the 29,460 CYP who ceased to be looked after, 29% found permanence under one of these three arrangements (Department for Education [DfE], 2019a). Despite there being slight differences in parental responsibility between these arrangements, all involve a legal procedure in which the individual is removed from their birth family and placed in a different family.

The current research focuses on CYP who have ceased to be looked-after as a result of an adoption order. Under an adoption order, parental responsibility for a child is transferred from the birth parent to the adoptive parent such that legal ties to the birth family are ceased. The child therefore becomes a member of the adoptive family, receiving the same rights and privileges had they been born to the adoptive family. The number of adoption orders in the UK peaked at 5,360 for the year ending March 2015 (DfE, 2019a), potentially as a result of the Government's Adoption Action Plan (DfE, 2011) which aimed to address the delay in the adoption process. Nonetheless, since 2015, this figure has continued to decline, such that in the year ending March 2019, the number of adoptions stood at 3,570 (DfE, 2019a). Of those CYP being placed for adoption 74% were aged between 1 and 4 years with the average age being 3 years and 1 month (DfE, 2019a).

Whilst the current research focuses on CYP placed under an adoption order, the issues discussed and conclusions drawn are also considered relevant to those CYP placed under alternative permanency arrangements as well as those in informal kinship care with extended family members or family friends. This research refers to CYP placed under an adoption order as 'adopted children' or 'adopted young people'.

1.2.2 Secondary School Transition

In the United Kingdom (UK), a child usually starts secondary school in the September after their eleventh birthday and remains in secondary education until they have reached the age of sixteen, moving from school Year 7 to Year 11. Whilst the term 'transition' can be used to refer to any situation in which a change in circumstances occurs; for the purposes of this study, it will be used to

denote the process of moving from a primary education setting to a secondary education setting. This school transition represents a developmental challenge for many children as they are required to learn new rules and routines, interact with new and unfamiliar adults and peers and adjust to a new and often larger and busier school environment (Evangelou et al., 2008; Lucey & Reay, 2000). Indeed Zeedyk et al. (2003) highlight the possibility for this change of schools to be a significant challenge in a child's education, having the opportunity to impact both learning outcomes and social and emotional well-being.

This experience may be even more challenging for adopted young people who have already experienced significant changes in their lives as a result of the adoption process. It is well documented that early childhood experiences can significantly impact school performance (van IJzendoorn et al., 2005); suggesting adopted young people to be particularly sensitive to the changes which occur at the time of secondary transition. Indeed, of those adoptive families visiting Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), secondary transition represents a time that can cause significant anxiety for both adopted young people and their parents (Barratt, 2011) with Adoption UK (AUK) (n.d.) producing guidance for secondary schools on welcoming these individuals.

1.3 National Context and Background to the Research

Changes in societal norms have resulted in the majority of adopted young people now being removed from their birth family following adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse or neglect (Selwyn, 2017; The Agency for

Adoption & Permanency Support [PAC-UK], 2017). These experiences, which are often prolonged and significant, may be post-natal or may begin prior to birth, with 40-75% of adopted CYP believed to have been exposed to alcohol in the womb (Gregory et al., 2015; Selwyn, 2017). However, there are some adopted young people who may have been adopted at birth without being exposed to such early trauma (AUK, 2014).

1.3.1 Possible Impacts of Early Abuse, Neglect and Trauma

There is a growing body of research evidence which outlines the possible negative impacts of abuse and neglect on neurological structure and functioning (Fisher, 2015; Teicher & Samson, 2016). These ACEs, which may also include exposure to domestic violence, parental mental health or substance misuse (Selwyn, 2017), can result in children experiencing chronic stress, during which toxic levels of cortisol flood the brain (McCrory et al., 2010). This can kill brain cells, affecting the development of key skills, such as language and executive functioning (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Chronic stress can also result in children remaining highly alert to possible further sources of threat, such that they become hyper-vigilant and impulsive in their behaviour (Anda et al., 2010). These changes in the brain's biochemical systems can result in these individuals finding it difficult to manage their own stress levels, resulting in more extreme responses to stressful experiences (Teicher & Samson, 2016). Indeed exposure to these ACEs in early development can be particularly harmful as they occur during a time when the brain is generating and pruning important neural connections.

ACEs can also impact a child's attachment patterns (Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, 2006). Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969)

provides a framework for thinking about the importance of early relationships and their impact on subsequent child development. Children who experience significant levels of disruption to their early adult attachments, through ACEs, can develop insecure patterns of attachment, meaning that they are often uncertain of and unable to predict the responses of adults. As a result, they may learn to look after themselves, appearing self-sufficient and independent, or alternatively, may cling to their caregiver and fear any separation. These individuals can appear anxious and hyper-vigilant in their behaviour and can find it difficult to self-regulate strong emotions. For most children removed from their birth families, their early adult relationships have been significantly disrupted, with any relationships they have formed with their birth families or foster carers ending when the adoption order is finalised.

When combining the possible impacts of ACEs on an individual's brain functioning and attachment patterns, it is conceivable to argue that the school environment could act as a significant source of stress for adopted young people, meaning they are vulnerable to experiencing difficulties with school adjustment and managing change (Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Ringeisen et al., 2009). This is particularly true of the secondary school environment which often demands more developed skills in independence and social interaction. These executive functioning skills can be difficult for some adopted young people (Behen et al., 2008; Wretham & Woolgar, 2017) with the potential for these difficulties to be exacerbated when attending a much less adult-directed secondary setting.

Similarly, difficulties with attachment patterns may significantly impact how these individuals interact and bond with the numerous adults and peers they

meet at secondary school (Phillips, 2007). These early teenage years also represent a time when children become increasingly dependent on peer relationships (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005) meaning social identity becomes a crucial aspect of development. Nonetheless, ACEs and the loss of the birth family may negatively impact the self-esteem and identity of adopted young people (Brodzinsky, 2011; French, 2013; Mahmood & Visser, 2015) such that forming friendships and having regard for others may be increasingly challenging (Phillips, 2007). Therefore the possible needs faced by adopted young people have the potential to make the transition to a new and unfamiliar secondary school a challenging and anxiety-provoking experience (Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Phillips, 2007).

1.3.2 School Experiences for Adopted Young People

The difficulties faced by many adopted young people can potentially have enduring impacts on individual school experiences and educational outcomes. Research has shown that adopted young people can experience a number of challenges in school, including difficulties with behaviour, attention and academic performance (Brodzinsky, 1993; Brown et al., 2017).

1.3.2.1 Educational Outcomes.

Formal records of educational outcomes for permanently-placed children have only recently been paid due regard, with the first set of Key Stage 2 (KS2) data made available by the DfE in 2014 (DfE, 2014a). More recently, in the year ending March 2018, 40% of children known to schools to be adopted achieved the expected standards in KS2 reading, writing and maths (DfE, 2019b), compared to 35% of looked-after children (LAC) and 65% of children who had not experienced care (DfE, 2019c). This indicates adopted young people to

underachieve in comparison to those who have not been looked after, but to attain similar levels when compared with looked-after pupils. It is however unclear whether these figures accurately capture the attainment of adopted young people, owing to the identification of the adoptive status being reliant upon parental disclosure to the school.

Whilst no definitive conclusions can be drawn from this attainment data, a meta-analysis involving more than 230,000 adopted and non-adopted children and their parents revealed adopted young people to often underachieve in school, with the percentage of children experiencing learning problems to be significantly higher for adopted compared with non-adopted children (van IJzendoorn & Juffer, 2006). Indeed, when considering post-16 aspirations and outcomes, Brown et al., (2019) found that adopted young people were less likely to continue education after compulsory school age and more likely to seek full time work, when compared with non-adopted young people.

Despite the similarities in achievement data between looked-after and adopted children, the level of educational support offered to these two groups has historically been imbalanced with the majority of adoptive parents believing their child required more school support than their peers (AUK, 2014).

1.3.2.2 Special Educational Needs.

Research has found adopted young people to be over-represented in special education populations (Brodzinsky & Steiger, 1991; Cooper & Johnson, 2007; van IJzendoorn & Juffer, 2006). An epidemiologically-based study by Sturges and Selwyn (2007) found that 25% of adopted children had a Statement of Special Educational Needs (now Education, Health and Care Plans, EHCPs)

and 20% were attending a specialist setting. Pre-adoption experiences and possible neurological differences have been suggested to account for the high rate of special educational needs and disability (SEND) amongst the adopted population (van IJzendoorn & Juffer, 2006).

This profile of SEND is varied. Research has revealed adopted young people to be at greater risk of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties than non-adopted populations (Selwyn et al., 2014). These SEMH needs can include attachment needs, low self-esteem, difficulties with social skills (AUK, 2014; Cooper & Johnson, 2007) and a range of diagnosed mental health conditions resulting in greater access to mental health services following adoption (O'Reilly et al., 2016; Sturgess & Selwyn, 2007). Indeed, a small-scale parental survey by an adoption organisation revealed that many adopted children had received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) following finalisation of the permanency arrangements (The Adoption Social, 2015). Nonetheless, similarities in the presentation of ASD and attachment difficulties mean it can be difficult to specifically identify the needs presented (Moran, 2010).

Adopted young people may also experience learning difficulties (Sturgess and Selwyn, 2007). Whilst it is difficult to ascertain the direction of the relationship between SEMH needs and learning needs, research has revealed 38% of adopted children to experience significant SEMH difficulties impacting on both engagement and progress in education (Biehal et al., 2010, as cited in Gore Langton, 2017). As these children regularly have very little belief in their own learning abilities, their motivation for learning is also often low (Dann, 2011), implying the need for support which targets both SEMH and learning difficulties.

1.3.2.3 Exclusions.

In a survey by AUK (2014), 2% of adopted CYP had been excluded from education, with half of these exclusions being at secondary school. More recent experimental statistics published by the DfE (2019d) revealed the rate of permanent exclusions for permanently-placed children to range from 0.1% to 0.28% and the rate of fixed term exclusions to range from 5.04% - 14.20% (depending on permanency arrangements). This is in comparison to the rates of permanent and fixed term exclusions for the overall school population which were recorded as 0.10% and 5.08% respectively for the same academic year (DfE, 2019d). Whilst the statistics for permanently-placed children are only experimental and rely on parental disclosure of the adoptive status, the data does indicate higher exclusion rates amongst adopted CYP, with the majority occurring during secondary education (DfE, 2019d).

Similarly, a survey by AUK (2017) found adopted children to be twenty times more likely to receive a permanent school exclusion than the general school population with a peak in the number of fixed term exclusions occurring in the first three years of secondary school (Year 7-9). This is in contrast to the general school population where the peak occurs in Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11), therefore raising questions about the support provided for adopted children as they transition to secondary school.

1.3.3 Legislative Changes

Whilst both research evidence and Government statistics indicate the difficulties experienced by adopted young people, legislation and educational provision have previously tended to focus purely on LAC. More recently however, the potential vulnerabilities of permanently-placed children have been paid greater

regard, resulting in changes to Government guidance to refer to both looked-after children and previously looked-after children. Updates to the Children and Social Work Act 2017, enforced as statutory from September 2018, have resulted in the remits of both the LA Virtual School and each school's Designated Teacher (DT) being expanded to include the oversight of the education of previously looked-after children from early years through to post-compulsory education. Consequently both Virtual Schools and DTs must now aim to raise progress, attainment and school attendance of these pupils in order to ensure individual educational and life opportunities are recognised and enhanced. Moreover, schools are now able to access Pupil Premium Plus grants for permanently-placed pupils (DfE, 2014b) with this money providing an opportunity for schools to address the needs of an individual and raise educational attainment through the provision of additional interventions and resources where necessary.

1.3.4 Misperceptions of Adoption

Whilst the Government's commitment to improving the support provided for adoptive families indicates an increasing recognition of their potential vulnerabilities, there is still a way to go (Gore Langton, 2017). Indeed, there appears to be an assumption that finding permanence in an adoptive family can alleviate any effects of early abuse and neglect, making adopted young people the 'lucky' ones amongst the population of those in care (Syne et al., 2012). This is despite adopted young people experiencing comparable if not more significant levels of adversity compared to looked-after children (Golding, 2010; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence [NICE], 2013). Thus it is unlikely their needs will disappear once the adoption order is finalised (DfE,

2018). These assumptions are particularly apparent amongst educational professionals (Dunstan, 2010; Gore Langton, 2017) and may in part be attributable to the lack of input on early child development and attachment provided in initial teacher training courses (Dunstan, 2010). Indeed, it is these misperceptions that can result in the needs of adopted young people often going unnoticed (Barratt, 2011).

Nonetheless, whilst this chapter has suggested that adopted young people may experience difficulties in school, they do not represent a homogenous population. Instead, a range of protective factors may serve to increase the resilience of these individuals and therefore mitigate any potential sources of stress, with the adoption itself also considered to potentially be an effective intervention (van IJzendoorn & Juffer, 2005). Moreover, it is well-established that the brain retains its plasticity (ability to be altered) well into adolescence, meaning that it may be possible to alter any neurological impacts of early ACEs (Fisher, 2015). Indeed, Woolgar (2013) outlines the importance of a biopsychosocial formulation which considers the individual in the context of their environments and therefore care must be taken to ensure a deficit model is not assumed. Consequently it is acknowledged that there may be different responses to starting secondary school and whilst some adopted young people may find it a source of challenge, others may welcome the opportunity to increase their independence and develop their identity (Barratt, 2011).

1.4 Local Context and Background to the Research

This research has been undertaken in a large LA where the researcher is on placement in an Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Discussion with colleagues revealed that work with permanently-placed children is conducted much less frequently than work with LAC. Any work that had been undertaken was often part of the EHCP process following a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or ASD, with only one colleague mentioning involvement around secondary transition support. Work with adopted children in secondary schools was particularly minimal. Nonetheless, the LA SEND teams have recently undergone a significant redesign process resulting in Educational Psychologists (EPs) working in locality teams which span pre-schools through to secondary schools. With this locality structure placing a greater focus on supporting school transitions, it is possible that EPs may offer more transition planning for all young people, including those who have been adopted.

The LA EPS currently employs one senior EP specialising in looked-after and previously looked-after children. As part of this role, monthly support groups for adoptive parents have been created in order to discuss and reflect on issues being faced in education. The researcher attended one of these groups during which adoptive parents revealed school support for their children to be limited with staff appearing to hold misperceptions around adoption as a 'fix' for early ACEs. Many of the parents viewed an EHCP as the only way to guarantee their child received support and avoided informal exclusion, with this particularly true for those attending secondary school.

In exploring the local context, the researcher also made contact with the LA Post-Adoption Service. Discussion revealed that the service had created a

guide for schools on the needs of adopted CYP and possible support strategies; however, no reference to school transitions was found, with the service indicating an interest in the findings of the current research. This guide was written in 2016 but cannot be referenced to ensure anonymity of the LA. Similarly, discussions with school special educational needs and disability coordinators (SENDCos) within the LA revealed that whilst primary schools generally engage all children in transition activities prior to moving to secondary school, additional support is only consistently offered to looked-after children. This further highlights the misperceptions of adoption and raises concerns around how this population are viewed in school.

1.5 Researcher's Position

This section is written in the first person. My interests in this research area are derived from personal and professional beliefs, values and experiences, particularly around advocacy, hearing the voices of marginalised groups and person-centred planning.

Prior to commencing the EP training, I was involved in setting up and delivering a project aimed at making the Personal Education Plans for looked-after children a more person-centred process. Through gathering the voices of these CYP, I gained insight into the impact these person-centred approaches could have on empowering individuals and bringing about positive change. Both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & Department of Health [DoH], 2015) state that CYP should be involved in decision-making processes,

regardless of additional needs. I believe this should also be true for research and therefore, in order to actualise these rights a participatory approach was chosen in which adopted young people were also involved in the research design (Mertens, 2015).

Following my experiences with looked-after children, I began to explore the experiences of previously looked-after children and became concerned about the lack of historical educational support for this population and the frequently cited misperceptions about adoption. I was therefore interested in exploring the educational experiences of adoptive families with a particular focus on starting secondary school as this can be a time of significant challenge for all young people and thus may be even more so for those who have faced early adversity. Whilst primary schools are often more nurturing settings, the move to secondary school requires adjustment to multiple environments and new staff and peers, having the potential to cause significant stress and anxiety.

By recognising the social model of disability (Oliver & Sapey, 2006), I believe this research will enable a more informed understanding of the educational, family and cultural systems around adopted young people such that it is then possible to bring about social change which strives for successful secondary education experiences. Whilst conducting participatory research aims to address power imbalances between the researcher and participants, it is acknowledged that as a trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I hold a position of power and thus my presence may influence both the research design and data collection process. However, in conducting this research, no pre-conceptions about the content of the data were explicitly held. Instead, my experience in hearing the voices of vulnerable groups enabled me to create an

environment in which individuals felt comfortable to share their own personal experiences.

1.6 Research Rationale and Aims

For the reasons outlined above, the current research aimed to explore the lived experience of starting secondary school from the perspectives of adopted young people and their parents who had made this transition following recent legislative changes. It was hoped that the qualitative nature of this research would produce a detailed understanding of the experience which could subsequently be used to inform practice when supporting school transitions for this population as well as provide implications for EPs who, owing to their position in LAs, are well placed to support the transition process.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the key terms used in the research before exploring both the national and local contexts as well as the researcher's position. Through these discussions, a rationale for the current research has been provided alongside the specific aims that were addressed. The next chapter will review the literature around secondary transition and general educational experiences before stating the research question which emerged.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter aimed to illustrate the possible detrimental impacts of early ACEs on subsequent development and thus the social, emotional and academic difficulties adopted young people may have in school. In doing this, the increased challenges in secondary school compared with primary school have been highlighted, thus implicating the start of secondary school to have the potential to represent a significant developmental challenge for adopted young people.

The current chapter outlines the systematic searches which were carried out in order to review the existing research evidence related to the experience of secondary school transition for permanently-placed individuals. Owing to a paucity of research in this area, this search was expanded to include the transition experience for looked-after pupils as this population was deemed to have the greatest similarity with permanently-placed pupils when considering vulnerability. The term 'looked-after' refers to those CYP who are cared for on a temporary or permanent basis by a caregiver who is not their biological parent. This caregiver does not adopt or have legal custody of the child. An additional search was then conducted to explore wider educational experiences for adoptive families.

This chapter provides detail regarding the systematic process of searching the existing literature as well as a synthesis and critical evaluation of the studies which were found. Finally, the implications of the literature review are placed

within relevant theoretical perspectives in order to inform the research question which was addressed through the current research.

2.2 Details of Search 1: Permanently Placed Children or Looked-After Children and Secondary Transition

A systematic literature search was conducted between 19 and 23 August 2019 and updated on 29 June 2020, using the search engine EBSCO Host to identify the literature in the research area. The following databases were searched:

- Academic Search Complete
- British Education Index
- Child Development and Adolescent Studies
- CINAHL
- Education Research Complete
- Education Resource Information Centre
- PsychINFO
- Teacher Reference Centre

Table 2.1 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to all research with further detail provided in Appendix 1.

Table 2.1*Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Search 1*

	Included	Excluded
Publication Details	Scholarly peer-reviewed journals, non-peer reviewed articles, unpublished doctoral theses, charity-conducted research	Clinical opinion and reflective articles, non-fiction sources, websites, policy documents, meta-analyses or literature reviews
Language	English	Non-English
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CYP finding permanence through an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order (formerly residence order)• Parents who had adopted a child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CYP living with their birth families• Parents caring for their birth child

	<p>under one of three permanency arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP in foster care or residential care • Foster carers • Professionals supporting looked-after or permanently placed CYP 	
Participants' Country of Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP adopted through the UK care system • Parents who had adopted a child through the UK care system • CYP being looked-after through the UK care system • Foster carers caring for a child considered looked-after by the UK care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP adopted internationally or from international institutions • CYP under the care of an international care system • Parents who had adopted or fostered a child internationally • Professionals supporting

	system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals supporting CYP considered looked-after by or adopted through the UK care system 	internationally adopted or looked-after CYP
Children's Education Status	CYP educated in the UK	CYP educated outside the UK
Participants' Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary aged CYP 11-16 years Adoptive parents, foster carers or professionals of any age 	CYP aged 16+ who had left compulsory education

Each database was searched independently using the subject index function to identify any synonyms and/or related terms for the key search terms, for example, adopted children, adoption (child), adoptees; looked-after children, foster children. Boolean logic was used to incorporate identified synonyms and related terms in order to avoid excluding articles which used different terminology. The following search terms were used:

- (Adopt* (expanded using each database's subject index function) OR Foster children* (expanded using each database's subject index function))
- AND ("transition*" or "transfer*")
- AND ("education*" or "school*")

Titles and abstracts were screened to determine relevance to the topic. Articles which appeared to meet the inclusion criteria were then subject to a full content screen, resulting in no articles meeting the criteria detailed above.

Owing to the paucity of research literature found using subject index searching techniques, keyword searching of Title, Subject Terms, Keywords and Abstracts search fields was undertaken on each data base independently using the following search terms:

- ("adopt* child*" OR "children adopted from care" OR "adoptees" OR "permanently placed child*" OR "previously in care" OR "previously looked after" OR "special guardianship*" OR "child arrangement order" OR "residence order" OR "look* after child*" OR "child* in care" OR "child* looked after" OR "CIC" OR "LAC" OR "child* in residential care" OR "out of home care" OR "adopt* parent")
- AND ("transition" OR "transfer")

Titles and abstracts were screened to determine relevance to the topic and ascertain whether they met the inclusion criteria. This screening process left two articles which were subjected to a full content screen. Both were deemed to

meet the criteria for inclusion in the current review (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Drew & Banerjee, 2019).

Both hand searching of the journal 'Adoption & Fostering' and citation searching using the SCOPUS database yielded no additional results.

A grey search using Google Scholar was undertaken using the phrases "adopted children and transition to secondary school", "looked-after children and transition to secondary school" and "children in care and transition to secondary school". This search yielded one article relating to practitioner-led research carried out by King (2009) and two Government research reports conducted by Selwyn et al. (2014) and Selwyn and Meakings (n.d.). All three publications were related to secondary transition for adopted young people. A systematic search was also conducted using the British Library's EThOS system in order to explore unpublished doctoral theses on secondary transition for adopted and looked-after children. The same phrases used in the Google Scholar search were used to conduct this search. Titles and abstracts were screened to determine relevance to the topic and ascertain whether they met the inclusion criteria. One unpublished thesis (Gosling, 2012) was excluded due to accessibility issues as a result of the 2020 Public Health Crisis. The thesis on which the article by Brewin and Statham (2011) was based was also found (Walker, 2009); however, it was not reviewed further. Websites by UK-based charities supporting adopted and looked-after children were searched individually for any research relating to secondary transition. No additional publications were found.

Finally, reference lists of the five included publications were hand searched for any further articles meeting the inclusion criteria. No additional articles were found. Appendix 2 provides details of the final five publications included in the review.

2.3 Critical Analysis of Research Findings from Literature Search 1

This section provides detailed exploration and analysis of the publications included in the critical review of the literature on both permanently-placed and looked-after children and secondary transition. Only one research paper specifically relating to the experiences of adopted young people (King, 2009) and one research paper specifically relating to the experiences of looked-after young people (Brewin & Statham, 2011) were found for the purpose of the current review. Nonetheless, two Government research reports exploring experiences of adoptive families more generally (Selwyn & Meakings, n.d.; Selwyn et al., 2014) and one research paper exploring the role of the Virtual School in supporting LAC (Drew & Banerjee, 2019) were also included in the review, owing to their reference to the specific experience of secondary transition. Included publications involved both qualitative and quantitative analysis and were undertaken between 2009 and 2019.

This review will begin with the publications involving adopted young people before then exploring the research involving LAC. In conducting this review, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2018) was used to analyse each publication. A summary of the critiques for each publication is also included in Appendix 3.

2.3.1 Adopted Young People and Secondary Transition

The first study to be discussed was not found in a peer-reviewed journal therefore raising questions regarding its trustworthiness and the conclusions drawn.

King (2009) conducted a mixed-methods study which explored the secondary transition experiences of eleven adopted children, twenty adoptive parents and four secondary school teachers. Data was collected from children in years 6 to 9 using questionnaires consisting of both open and closed questions which aimed to explore feelings towards transition, the needs of the children, and how schools had supported the process. The children were also asked to provide a list of the factors which helped and hindered their transition as well as top tips for other adopted children, their parents and teachers. Data was gathered from the parents using a similar questionnaire and was followed-up through a focus group with six parents which aimed to elicit a richer set of data related to seven key areas (sharing information, curriculum issues, perceived needs of adopted children, transition process, pastoral support, homework and training for schools). Finally, King (2009) conducted interviews with four members of secondary school staff based on the key areas raised from the child and parent data. Whilst the type of interview is not stated specifically, perusal of the schedule indicates a structured approach was chosen.

This research revealed adopted children to be aware of their own needs, particularly around making and keeping friends, self-organisation and knowing who to talk to when feeling worried. Despite this, children were often excited about the new opportunities presented by secondary school with any concerns mostly relating to bullying and sharing their adoptive status too widely. Amongst

those who had already started secondary school, just over half reported feeling stressed due to the higher number of people, the personal organisation skills required and the increased learning demands. However, most children spoke positively about the support they received for transition. Parents were also generally positive about this support and whilst about half felt the support did not go beyond that provided to all children, this was not considered negative.

The data also revealed parents to be more concerned about the transition than the children themselves owing to their awareness of their child's needs and a perceived lack of awareness of adoption amongst school staff. Additionally, whilst many parents had shared the adoptive status with their child's school, this was often for a reactive purpose when issues arose, rather than to inform a proactive response from the school. Parents were unsure how the information would be shared around the school and hoped it would be handled sensitively; however, some had experienced negative consequences, such as hostility from parents and their child being teased.

Overall, King (2009) presents detailed findings with the involvement of children, parents and teachers allowing for a rich set of data which can be triangulated to explore similar meanings regarding secondary transition. However, designing subsequent interview schedules based on areas raised in the data has the potential to result in leading questions, thus introducing a source of bias into the research. Moreover, whilst topics of importance were followed up with face-to-face methods, the questionnaire methodology does not allow for generation of detailed data and may have been completed by a subset of individuals whose experiences did not represent the wider adoptive population. Indeed, the absence of a discussion regarding the philosophical position of the research

makes it difficult to ascertain whether there is conflict between this position and the data collection methods chosen. Similarly, owing to the lack of an explicit description of the data analysis process, it is unclear how the themes were derived from the data or how this was checked to ensure confirmability.

King (2009) privileges the voices of parents and school staff over the voices of children who were asked only to complete a questionnaire that was unable to produce any rich experiential data about starting secondary school. Thus the majority of the findings are taken from data collection with adults. Moreover, there is a lack of information regarding the role of the researcher. This lack of reflexivity in acknowledging possible sources of researcher bias in data collection and data interpretation, as well as of researcher power in influencing participant responses raises questions regarding the trustworthiness of this research. Claims are made regarding the positive outcomes of involving outside agencies, such as the EPS; however, only one participant mentioned EP involvement. As the research has been conducted by the EPS, it is possible that specific data has been presented to support the importance of EP involvement with adopted children during secondary transition.

The next two publications to be discussed were carried out by the same research team exploring the experiences of adoptive families who had faced an adoption disruption or where family life was at risk of disruption in both England and Wales (Selwyn & Meakings, n.d.; Selwyn et al., 2014). Owing to the similarities in the aims, methods and findings of these two publications, they will be reviewed together here. Whilst neither publication focused solely on the transition to secondary school, this experience was raised in both publications, therefore permitting their inclusion in this review.

Both publications aimed to identify the number of adoptions that had been disrupted post adoption-order as well as explore the experiences of those families who had either experienced these disruptions or where risk of disruption was high. Both publications utilised a mixed-methods design, involving the use of surveys and individual interviews with adoptive parents, with interviews with adopted young people, social workers and adoption managers also used by Selwyn et al. (2014). Whilst both publications involved reference to the secondary transition experience, these references were more frequent in the research conducted in Wales (Selwyn & Meakings, n.d.). Nonetheless, both publications revealed the stressors and challenges faced by adoptive families at this transition time with many of the young people finding it difficult to cope with the larger environment, the increased expectations around independence and the less nurturing nature of secondary school. Additionally, families discussed the potential for bullying as a result of the adoptive status, with this being particularly prevalent at secondary school (Selwyn et al., 2014).

The research by Selwyn and Meakings (n.d.) revealed variations in the level of support offered to adopted young people at the time of secondary transition, with some young people receiving positive support from SEND departments and additional transition visits to the secondary school. Conversely, some families found that schools were not sensitive in their responses to parental requests for transition support with a lack of awareness of adoption amongst school staff having the potential to cause distress to both adopted young people and their parents. Indeed, two adoptive parents wished they had handled secondary transition better.

Overall, these two publications reveal secondary transition to have the potential to be a challenging time for adoptive families with variations in both the level and content of the support received. Nonetheless, these publications were not found in a peer-reviewed journal therefore raising questions regarding trustworthiness and the conclusions drawn. In addition, the sample only includes those families where the adoption had been disrupted or was at risk of disruption, and therefore it is not possible to conclude that the findings around secondary transition are representative of all adoptive families, particularly those families experiencing no post-adoption disruption. Indeed, whilst the data analysis appears rigorous and well-presented with sufficient data used to support the findings, the themes which arose were pre-determined prior to data collection. This possible source of bias, as well as bias resulting from the role of the researchers, is not acknowledged and therefore the potential for these influences on the findings must be considered

Despite these limitations, both publications include a clear statement of the research aims with the research design, recruitment strategy and data collection methods considered appropriate for meeting these aims. As a result, both publications provide a useful contribution to existing knowledge around the experiences of adoptive families facing post-adoption disruption, with implications for both practice and future research presented. Yet, whilst adopted CYP were included in the research by Selwyn et al. (2014), this number was small (10) and once again the voices of adoptive parents and professionals appear to have been prioritised.

2.3.2 Looked-After Young People and Secondary Transition

Brewin and Statham (2011) carried out a qualitative study which explored the secondary transition experiences for LAC from the perspectives of twenty-two carers, nineteen secondary school teachers, three LAC education support officers, social workers and fourteen children themselves. Data was collected using a combination of semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and a focus group with both consisting of a mixture of factual, descriptive, evaluative and hypothetical questions which aimed to explore the key factors which supported secondary transition. This research was conducted in two stages. First LAC in Year 6, their carers and teachers were interviewed regarding the upcoming transition. In addition, Year 7 children, their carers and teachers were interviewed about their recent transition. Data was also collected from social workers and Education Support Officers. In the second stage, those in the original Year 6 cohort, their carers and teachers were interviewed again when the children entered Year 7. Triangulating views from a range of stakeholders is a key strength of this research as it allowed the researchers to indicate where all individuals held similar perspectives, therefore enhancing the credibility of findings.

The research revealed a range of differing and interacting factors which supported or hindered the transition experience which were placed within the Ecological Systems Theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Factors were included at all levels of the theoretical framework, ranging from within-child factors such as individual fears and social skills to wider systemic factors, such as peer relationships, multi-agency working and ongoing changes in a child's life. The data collected from the children revealed a range of fears about the upcoming transition, such as bullying, getting lost and increased academic

demands; however, peer relationships were considered a key factor in increasing the success of the transition, with making new friends regarded as a positive outcome of secondary school. Nonetheless, the children also spoke about the friendships they left behind at primary school.

Carers were aware of their children's social and behavioural needs, citing these as possible factors which may hinder a successful transition. However, they also spoke about the transition as an opportunity for the child to have a fresh start, with any difficulties soon being resolved. Additional supportive factors included making the move with a friend, information sharing between primary and secondary schools and general transition activities. Nonetheless, similar to King (2009), carers indicated that LAC did not experience different transition activities to other children. The importance of minimising differences between LAC and their peers so they did not feel singled out was also raised on several occasions; however, no child made reference to this feeling of difference.

Overall, the researchers acknowledged the needs of LAC to be similar to the needs of all children during the period of secondary transition, and thus supportive factors will be dependent upon the individual child and their contexts. The need for holistic, individual and enhanced support both leading up to as well as during the transition period was therefore concluded with this support involving information sharing between key stakeholders and aiming to minimise potential differences. Whilst the design of this research was appropriate for the research aims and involved conducting a pilot study to ensure suitability, data collection took place only one term after the start of secondary school, during which the young people were likely to have been experiencing a 'honeymoon' period. Collecting additional data several terms into secondary school would

therefore help to gain a greater understanding of transition over time. Finally, this research also appeared to prioritise the voices of adults and whilst input from children was sought, this input was limited and did not allow for a detailed experiential exploration. Similarly, the lack of acknowledgement of the researchers' role and position in the research process means it is possible that the position of power held by the researchers may have influenced the responses provided by all participants.

This need for holistic, individualised and enhanced transition support leading up to and during the transition period was also revealed in research undertaken by Drew and Banerjee (2019). This research aimed to explore the role of the Virtual School in supporting the education of LAC through an online survey distributed to 148 LA Virtual Schools, with a particular focus on the support provided across the primary to secondary transition years. This focus on secondary transition therefore permitted the inclusion of this article in the current review. Similar to the research by Brewin and Statham (2011), findings related to 'specific transition support' spanned a range of systemic levels. These levels included direct support with children and carers through secondary school visits and the use of individual mentors or caseworkers, as well as support at the level of the microsystem through fostering supportive and understanding relationships amongst school staff, carers, social workers and peers. For these reasons, the support provided during secondary transition addressed underlying psychological needs, including resilience, self-esteem and relationships as well as promoting educational attainment. Indeed, emphasising positive relationships appeared central to the support provided by the Virtual Schools with this seen as an important protective factor in enhancing

individual pupil resilience and promoting successful secondary transition experiences. The importance of joined-up working with both carers and schools as well as increasing communication with multi-agency workers, such as EPs and CAMHS, were highlighted as areas for development, particularly when supporting LAC through secondary transition.

Whilst clearly stated, the findings and conclusions of the research by Drew and Banerjee (2019) are limited by the small sample size with only 29 LA Virtual Schools responding to the online survey (20% response rate). As a result, issues related to the credibility of the themes mean that they may not be representative of the all Virtual Schools across the country. Indeed, those who did choose to respond may have represented those authorities providing a high level of support with those providing less support choosing not to participate through fear of being viewed as inadequate. Similarly, whilst the use of an online survey allowed the researchers to reach a greater population, this method does not allow for a detailed exploration of the ideas and responses provided by the participants. Those which are provided may not be interpreted appropriately, with the absence of face-to-face contact not allowing for further checking of the data gathered and interpretations made. Indeed, the lack of explicit acknowledgement of the role of the researchers throughout all stages of the research means it is not possible to state whether these relationships and possible sources of bias have been considered. Moreover, the absence of a critical examination of the role of the researchers and how the themes were derived from the data mean it is not possible to conclude that the data analysis was sufficiently rigorous.

Despite these limitations, the article clearly states the research questions to be addressed by the research with the relevance to the national context being made explicit. The qualitative methodology and online survey are considered to be appropriate to address the research questions through allowing a detailed exploration of the services provided by the Virtual Schools and thus the subjective thoughts towards such services. Indeed this online survey was designed in collaboration with a group of representatives from twelve Virtual Schools who also checked the coding of themes to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. By involving the target population in the research process, the community validity of the research is therefore increased (Staley, 2009) and thus the contributions of the research to practice are considered valuable.

2.3.3 Summary

In summary, the publications analysed in this section suggests that both adopted and looked-after children have needs in a range of areas which may benefit from additional support to enable them to have a successful transition to secondary education. Whilst there is no specific criteria outlining what a successful transition experience entails, remaining in school and making progress in a range of developmental domains appear to indicate success. Therefore providing support at a range of systemic levels may result in a more successful start to secondary school. For adoptive parents or foster carers, the understanding of the possible needs of adopted or looked-after children amongst school staff as well as information sharing about the status appeared to be essential to a successful transition. Nonetheless, it remained important to minimise difference between the child and their peers. Whilst the studies

involved gathering the views of CYP, these views were often marginalized by the views of the adults around each child.

2.4 Details of Search 2: Permanently Placed Children and Educational Experiences

Owing to a scarcity of research on secondary transition experiences, a further systematic literature search exploring educational experiences of adoptive families was conducted on 3 April 2020 and updated on 26 June 2020 using the same databases mentioned in section 2.2.

Table 2.2 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to all research with further detail provided in Appendix 4.

Table 2.2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Search 2

	Included	Excluded
Publication Details	Scholarly peer-reviewed journals	Clinical opinion and reflective articles, non-fiction sources, websites, unpublished theses, charity resources, policy

		documents, meta-analyses or literature reviews
Language	English	Non-English
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP finding permanence through an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order (formerly residence order) • Parents who had adopted a child under one of three permanency arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP in informal kinship care with friends or family members • CYP in foster care • Parents caring for a non-biological child under an informal kinship arrangement • Foster carers • Professionals supporting adoptive families or families formed through adoption
Participants' Country of Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP permanently placed through a domestic care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP permanently placed across international borders

	system, ideally the UK care system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents who had adopted a child through their domestic care system, ideally the UK care system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents who had adopted a child across international borders
Education Status	CYP educated in the UK	CYP educated outside the UK
Participants' Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYP aged 0-16 years Adoptive parents of any age 	CYP aged 16+ who had left compulsory education

Keyword searching of Title, Subject Terms, Keywords and Abstracts search fields was undertaken on each database independently using the following search terms:

- ("adopt* status" OR "adopt* child*" OR "children adopted from care" OR "adoptees" OR "adopt* young person" OR "adopt* young people" OR "permanently placed child*" OR "previously in care" OR "previously looked after" OR "adopt* parent")

- AND ("school*" OR "educat*")
- NOT ("international* adopt*")

Titles and abstracts were screened to determine relevance to the topic and ascertain whether they met the inclusion criteria. This screening process left ten articles which were subjected to a full content screen, resulting in three articles meeting the inclusion criteria (Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Crowley, 2019; Gilling, 2014).

Hand searching of the journal 'Adoption and Fostering' and citation searching using the SCOPUS database yielded no further articles which met the inclusion criteria. Finally, reference lists of the three included articles were hand searched for any further articles meeting the inclusion criteria. No additional articles were found. Appendix 5 provides details of the final three articles included in the review.

2.5 Critical Analysis of Research Findings from Literature Search 2

The second literature search yielded three papers discussing the educational experiences of adoptive families with all including the voices of CYP to varying degrees and two also capturing the voices of adoptive parents. These three studies involved both qualitative and quantitative data and were undertaken between 2007 and 2019. This section will review these papers together beginning with those which primarily aim to capture the views of CYP. In conducting this review, the CASP Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2018) was used to analyse each publication. A summary of these critiques is also included in Appendix 6.

Crowley (2019) carried out a qualitative study which explored the views of four adopted young people, aged between 10 and 16 years, on their education and social development. Data was collected using SSIs and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The rich in-depth data coupled with the thorough phenomenological analysis are key strengths of this research as they enabled the exploration of individual experiences. Nonetheless, the small sample size consisting of only female participants in one LA is a significant limitation of the research and does not allow for the generalisation of findings to the wider population of adopted young people.

Despite this, the study design was appropriate to address the research questions which are clearly outlined in the paper. Five themes were identified from the participants' narratives: identity and self, relationships, school, attachment, and adoptive status, with distinctive accounts from each participant. Whilst not explored specifically through the research questions, this research did involve discussion around the transition to secondary school with two participants speaking of the challenges they experienced during this time, including feeling vulnerable, emotional and having low self-esteem. Despite such challenges, one participant was able to work through the issues they experienced; however, no further detail is provided. Most prominently however, participants highlighted the importance of relationships. Whilst two participants experienced difficulties with their peers, including feeling anxious when interacting with others and having underdeveloped social skills, the other two participants had experienced positive peer relationships, with one participant highlighting the significance of her peer group following the transition to secondary school. Despite these positive peer relationships, three participants

also spoke about being bullied and/or rejected by their peers as a result of their adoptive status, with these bullying incidents ending for one and increasing for another on secondary transition. As a result, all participants had considered how to keep their adoption secret from their peers. Finally, three participants spoke about their SEND, including difficulties with learning, concentration and group work, indicating the needs to be both social and academic.

Crowley (2019) provides information regarding the participants' attachment styles with two participants considered to display securely attached behaviours and two to display more insecurely attached behaviours. From this, Crowley (2019) argues that the research supports the assertion that adoption which leads to a secure attachment can be an "effective intervention" (p.176) which leads to positive educational outcomes. Nonetheless, this conclusion is only tentative as no formal measures of attachment security or educational outcomes were conducted and only limited information regarding each participant's pre-adoption and genetic history were gathered. As a result, the experiences of each participant may not be representative of a greater number of adopted young people.

The potential for social, emotional and academic difficulties to be experienced by adopted young people was also revealed in research by Gilling (2014). This research provides a case study of the primary educational experiences of one child (Jasper) who had been adopted at age two, before moving to the UK at age seven. This study revealed that, despite an unremarkable education prior to moving to the UK, Jasper struggled in his first UK primary school, experiencing difficulties with concentration and social relationships such that he was accused of bullying his peers and threatened with exclusion. The paper argues that this

first primary school did not understand Jasper's needs or provide any support or flexibility, instead 'labelling' and blaming him. On moving to a second primary school, Jasper's needs were considered, interventions were implemented and a more successful experience ensued. In addition to outlining Jasper's experience, the paper also provides information on the educational experiences of his adoptive parents. Despite sharing the adoptive status with the first primary school as well as the possible impacts Jasper may face at school, the paper indicates a lack of response from senior staff and inconsistent communication with the family in which they were not valued as the experts in their child. This is in contrast to the second primary school who valued the family's knowledge and displayed a greater awareness of the potential impacts of early ACEs on subsequent child development.

Overall, this case study provides an in-depth exploration of the educational experiences of one adoptive family and is told from the perspective of the service-users themselves, giving power to those whose voices are often marginalised in research. The research also acknowledges the epistemological position of constructionism and therefore how the meanings the family has constructed from their experience may not be representative of other adopted families. Nonetheless, the ethnographic methodology utilised in this research means that it is not possible to generate conclusions which can be generalised to the wider adoptive population. Moreover, the experience is told by the adoptive mother, with comments from Jasper used to supplement the story. Therefore, despite capturing the voice of the child, parental voices were prioritised.

The final paper to be reviewed in this section also primarily involved gathering the voices of adoptive parents, with minimal consideration given to the voices of the adopted CYP themselves. Research by Cooper and Johnson (2007) involved the distribution of a survey to all adoptive parents in one LA in order to explore their views on their children's' education. A section was also included to gather views from the adopted children. The survey aimed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data with the question content designed by EPs in collaboration with the LA Adoption Support Team and the LA Looked-After Children in Education service. This multi-agency commitment to the survey acts as a strength of the research as it is likely that a greater range of topics were addressed through the questions with a mix of both quantitative and qualitative questions used to support one another. Nonetheless, surveys do not allow for the in-depth exploration of views, therefore limiting the insight which can be gathered. In total, survey responses were received from one hundred parents and thirty-three children. This was considered a reasonable response rate by the researchers; however, they do acknowledge that those who chose to participate may have been those experiencing the greatest difficulties with education. This therefore means the findings may not be representative of the general population of adoptive families.

The data gathered from the children provided varied responses to questions regarding enjoyment of school; however, 70% expressed some dislikes about school with these divided between social interactions and schoolwork, mirroring the findings of both Crowley (2019) and Gilling (2014). Most notably, many of the responses involved references to friendships, kindness and social interactions, highlighting the significance of relationships to the adopted children

in the sample. Similarly, when asked about support from teachers, the most common responses concerned increased support to stop bullying as well as with school work. The significance of relationships for children was reflected in the concerns of adoptive parents around attachment, identity and relationships. Whilst the majority of parents were happy with their child's school progress, 59% said that their child was having some difficulties with a significant minority expressing concerns around their child's friendships (32%) as well as bullying or teasing regarding the adopted status (16%). In addition to these SEMH needs, parents also identified their children to have difficulties with their learning and concentration with 39% of the children identified by their school as having SEND, higher than the wider child population.

The research by Cooper and Johnson (2007) also explored perceptions around the understanding of adoption in schools as well as the relationships between school staff and families. Nearly all parents had shared some information with the school about the adoption with 67% satisfied with the school's response. Nonetheless, some parents expressed concerns around staff understanding of adoption as well as a lack of communication between the home and school systems. Most notably however, was the acknowledgement from parents that adopted children may require additional support at times of transition, particularly when moving to secondary school, yet no further information on this is provided. Overall, whilst the survey provided a rich data set that captured both child and parental views on educational experiences, this research was conducted over a decade ago in one LA and may therefore not represent current views amongst adoptive families. Additionally, and in line with the research conducted by Gilling (2014), the views of adoptive parents have been

prioritised over the views of CYP, further illustrating the historic marginalisation of these voices.

2.5.1 Summary

In summary, the three papers analysed in this section suggest educational experiences to be mixed for both adopted children and their parents and to be influenced by individual factors, family and school factors, and wider cultural perceptions. Whilst these studies were not directly about transition, two papers made reference to the difficulties adopted children may experience at these times, with implications provided for additional targeted support. Moreover, the research raised friendships, identity and learning to be potential sources of difficulty for adopted children, with the demands in all three areas of development being greater in secondary school compared to primary school, and therefore implying secondary education to have the potential to be an increasingly challenging for adopted CYP. Finally, the understanding of adoption amongst school staff and the importance of collaborative communication between the home and school systems, were key themes to emerge from the review and appear to be crucial to the child's experience of education. Nonetheless, whilst the views of adopted children were gathered in all three papers, only one paper prioritised these voices, suggesting an important area for further research.

2.6 Issues and Implications Arising from the Literature Review

This chapter will now consider the implications which have arisen from both the educational issues addressed in Chapter 1 and the literature review undertaken

in this current chapter. It is hoped that by considering these implications, the need for additional research into the experience of starting secondary for adopted young people will become apparent.

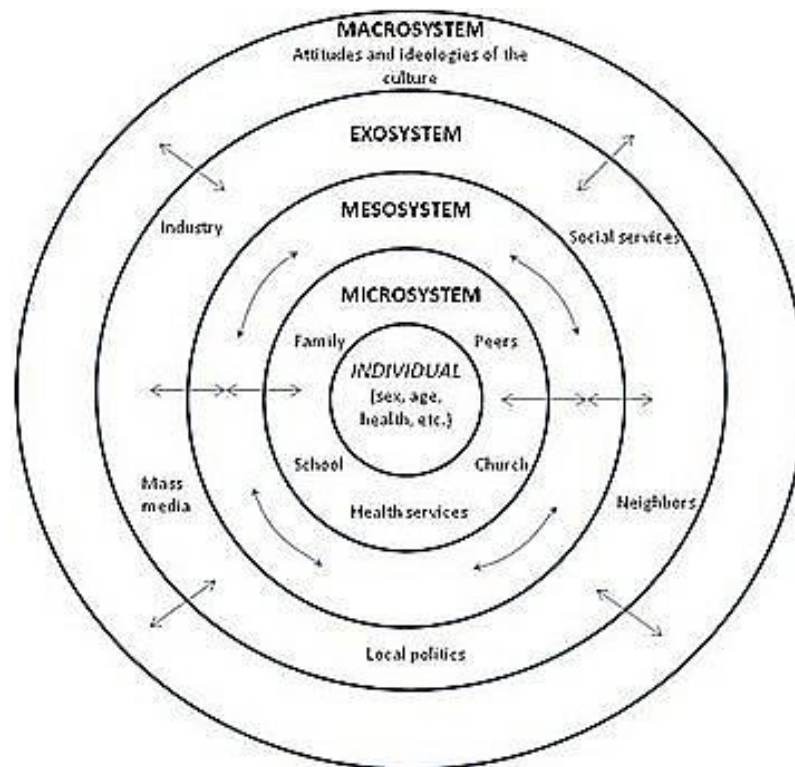
Owing to the needs of adopted young people outlined in Chapter 1, any research involving this population needs to be placed within the psychological perspective of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969). In such a perspective, early nurturing and attuned relationships are considered hugely influential for a child's social and emotional development, response to learning tasks and therefore adjustment to the school environment (Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Geddes, 2006). It is therefore possible to argue that early ACEs may disrupt a child's subsequent development and school adjustment, an adjustment that may be increasingly challenging in a secondary school environment which is often more demanding than primary school.

2.6.1 Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

The literature analysed in this chapter has indicated the school experiences for adopted young people to be influenced by numerous factors at a range of systemic levels. For this reason, the current research was placed within the systemic theoretical framework outlined in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, see Figure 2.1). In adopting this framework, the need to consider and understand the multiple systems influencing school experiences as well as the interactions between these systems was recognised.

Figure 2.1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979)



Bronfenbrenner proposed that CYP are constantly actively engaging with the environments around them through reciprocal interactions that evolve over time. The different interacting systems which make up the environment were as follows:

- The 'microsystem' refers to the child's immediate environments within which the child is situated, such as their family environment, their school environment and their peer group.
- The 'mesosystem' refers to the interactions between the immediate environments such as the communication between the family and school staff.

- The 'exosystem' refers to settings which impact the child indirectly, such as the neighborhood within which they live and school management policies.
- The 'macrosystem' refers to the wider social and cultural environment in which a child lives and includes cultural values and beliefs.
- The 'chronosystem' was a subsequent addition and refers to the influence of changes over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

By placing the research within this theoretical framework, the experience of starting secondary school can be understood from a systemic perspective and thus the findings may provide implications for supporting additional adopted young people to start secondary education.

2.6.2 Resiliency Theories

In addition to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, the researcher believes a theoretical framework built around resiliency theories could also be used to understand the experience of starting secondary school for adoptive families. This experience can be one of anxiety and challenge for all children (Evangelou et al., 2008) and whilst many schools have procedures to support children make this change, successful adjustment may equally be the result of individual resilience (Akos, 2004). Resilience is defined as the ability to manage, adapt to and overcome significant adversity (Luthar et al., 2006), and whilst starting secondary school may not immediately appear to be a source of adversity, for some children it can be a source of potential challenge, as alluded to in Chapters 1 and 2.

Several protective processes have been suggested to mediate the risk posed by adverse life events (Rutter, 1987). Therefore positive adaptation to periods of change, including the experience of starting secondary school, appear to be the result of protective factors, both within the child and within the environment. Such a theoretical framework is closely aligned with Bronfenbrenner (1979) as it also recognises the influence of the wider community systems around the individual. Table 2.3 displays the resilience factors which have been proposed by Newman and Blackburn (2002) following a review of the international literature on resilience with a connection drawn to periods of transition.

Table 2.3

Resilience Factors (Newman & Blackburn, 2002)

The Child	The Family	The Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperament (active, good-natured) • Female prior to and male during adolescence • Age (being younger) • Higher IQ • Social skills • Personal awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm supportive parents • Good parent-child relationships • Parental harmony • Valued social role (e.g. care of siblings) • Close relationship with one parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive extended family • Successful school experiences • Friendship networks • Valued social role (e.g. a job, volunteering, helping neighbours)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of empathy • Internal locus of control • Humour • Attractiveness 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close relationship with an unrelated mentor • Member of religious or faith community
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Research has previously been conducted to explore the concept of resilience in the context of secondary transition for CYP (Catterall, 1998). When considering the start of secondary school there are several stressors which have the potential to result in the experience being one of trauma, such as new teachers, new peer groups, new school buildings and increased expectations of both independence and learning. Indeed, when this is combined with the possible difficulties experienced by adopted young people, it is possible to argue that starting secondary school could be a more significant source of trauma for this population. Nonetheless, the existence of protective factors has the potential to minimise these sources of stress and so by placing the current research within a resiliency framework, it is possible to consider the reasons for both successful and unsuccessful transition experiences amongst adoptive families.

2.7 Chapter Summary and the Research Question

Previous research into secondary school transition suggests that whilst transition represents a challenge for all children, successful transitions are characterised by the following features:

- “developing new friendships and improving their self-esteem and confidence
- having settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents
- showing an increasing interest in school and school work
- getting used to their new routines and school organisation with great ease
- experiencing curriculum continuity” (Evangelou et al., 2008, p.16).

Yet, it is clear that adopted young people can have needs in all these areas, making it conceivable to argue that they may find the experience of starting secondary school increasingly challenging, needing additional support to be able to adjust. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that adopted young people do not represent a homogenous group and whilst some may find the experience of starting secondary school one of stress and anxiety, others may appreciate the opportunity to develop their independence and reinvent their identity (Barratt, 2011).

Despite acknowledgement of these possible responses to starting secondary school there has been little research carried out into understanding the experiences from the perspective of adopted young people themselves and any research that has explored this area has tended to prioritise the views of adoptive parents and school staff. It is hoped that by exploring these experiences from the perspectives of adopted young people and their parents, it would be possible to inform practice when supporting adopted young people to

begin secondary education. The following research question was therefore proposed:

What are the experiences of adopted young people and their adoptive parents when starting secondary school?

Additionally, owing to the lack of involvement of adopted young people in previous research, the current research aims to give a voice to this population, both in the design of the research and in the generation of data. For this reason, elements of a participatory research design were adopted and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Therefore when designing the research with adopted young people the research question was used as possible suggestion and agreed through a collaborative process.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by outlining the ontological and epistemological framework in which this research is set. Following this, the design of the research will be presented, including the strategies used to recruit research consultants and participants and the procedures used for both data collection and analysis. Particular regard will be paid to the participatory nature of this research, including the research purpose and specific nature of participation. The chapter concludes with a discussion regarding the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the research.

3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Position

All research is undertaken within a particular paradigm or worldview (Cresswell, 2009). The term 'paradigm' is used to refer to a set of philosophical beliefs held by the researcher about the nature of the social world, their place in it and the relationships which exist (Cresswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These paradigms differ in their assumptions related to the nature of reality (ontology); the theory and justification of knowledge and the researcher-participant relationship (epistemology); and the process of gaining knowledge (methodology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is therefore necessary for the researcher to understand their own beliefs about the world as these beliefs will guide the research questions, the research design and the specific methods used to collect and interpret data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2015).

Guba and Lincoln (2011) suggest five paradigms to be evident within the

research literature (Appendix 7). These paradigms were used to justify the ontological and epistemological positions of the researcher when undertaking the current research.

3.2.1 Ontological Position

Ontology relates to the nature of reality and thus is concerned with the question “what is there to know?” (Willig, 2013, p.12). Within the research literature, two opposing ontological positions, known as ‘realism’ and ‘relativism’, are often described (Gray, 2009 as cited in Heaviside, 2017). Realism refers to the existence of one true reality which is independent of individual positions and values and therefore can be measured scientifically. This is in contrast to relativism, which refers to the existence of multiple and equally valid realities which result from different individual subjective interpretations. This relativist paradigm was deemed congruent with the aims of the current research as it recognises the existence of socially and culturally constructed multiple knowledges which have been shaped through life experiences. In this way, how each individual makes sense of starting secondary school is unique to them and has been shaped through social interactions with others in their lives.

The relativist paradigm also recognises that reality is not absolute and therefore can change over time as a result of further experience and social interaction. When relating this to the current research, the language associated with the terms ‘adopted’ and ‘secondary school’ may influence the interactions which occur between individuals and thus individual interpretations of these concepts. Through being exposed to discussions around their adopted status and their secondary transition, young people may hold differing self-perceptions and constructions around secondary education. By gaining an understanding of

these different knowledges, it is possible to recognise the complexities of the social phenomenon of starting secondary school within an individual context (Willig, 2013).

The current research also acknowledged a social constructionist position. Social constructionism recognises the role of social and cultural contexts, experiences and discourse in the generation of knowledge (Berg & De Jong, 1996). In the current research, the researcher acknowledges the existence of symbolic interactionism in that through discourse with others, participants may have co-constructed knowledge about the nature of the reality of being 'adopted' and the transition to secondary school. It is these ongoing interactions which continue to shape individual knowledge over time and help these individuals to predict future events, therefore acknowledging personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955) as a theory to explain differing constructions of the same event.

3.2.1.1 Constructivism.

In line with the relativist paradigm, the researcher also held a social constructivist ontology which recognises the individual participant as integral to the process of meaning making as they actively seek to interpret their experiences and create knowledge about the social world within which they exist (Cresswell, 2009). In this way, individual reality is the result of cognitive and affective operations within a social context (Gray, 2009 as cited in Heaviside, 2009). In the context of the current research, it was recognised that the production of knowledge and meaning about starting secondary school was held within individual constructions and influenced by the social world.

3.2.2 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge, attempting to address the question “how, and what, can we know?” (Willig, 2013, p.4). Through attempting to answer this question, it is necessary for the researcher to consider the nature of what can be known, how individuals gather knowledge about the world around them and the researcher-participant relationship (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2015; Willig, 2013). The current research is positioned within a social constructivist epistemology which acknowledges the role of the individual in constructing their own unique subjective knowledge about the world through exposure to social interactions and expectations, whilst also acknowledging the wider influence of historical, cultural and political frameworks on this knowledge creation (Cresswell, 2009).

This epistemological position is consistent with the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) framework which recognises the influence of reciprocal interactions between different systems on an individual's experiences. The social constructivist epistemology accepts the existence of unique multiple understandings and meanings of the same experience of starting secondary school as an adoptive family and that these perspectives will alter depending on the political or cultural frameworks which are prominent at the time. It is acknowledged that whilst there may be particular factual aspects to the secondary transition experience, such as new classrooms and new teachers, it is the individual cognitive and affective reflection on these factors which will produce knowledge. Thus whilst individuals may have the same experience, they may interpret it differently.

The epistemological assumptions underpinning this research also acknowledged the role of the researcher in the creation of knowledge about the phenomenon being explored. Therefore in order to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences, it was necessary to move away from a description of the experience to a more interpretative approach which involved collaboration between the researcher and the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This dynamic relationship is important in uncovering the participant's individual constructs (Smith et al., 2009) and therefore results in an understanding of the experience which is socially co-constructed "by people active in the research process" (Mertens, 2015, p.16), namely the researcher and the participant.

The epistemological position also incorporated a hermeneutical phenomenological approach which acknowledged the influence of the researcher's own beliefs, values and experiences on the interpretative process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2015). Within this double hermeneutic, the interpretations of secondary school presented by the participant were then further interpreted by the researcher in a continuous cyclical process (Smith & Osborn, 2003, as cited in Smith et al., 2009). Therefore whilst the current research aimed to explore the experience of starting secondary school for adoptive families, it was acknowledged that the transactional interaction between the researcher and the participants would contribute to the production of knowledge about the experience and serve to add meaning to the findings.

3.2.3 Recognition of the Transformative Paradigm

The current research also acknowledged the transformative paradigm as it was informed by an axiology which aimed to address issues of power, ensure

reciprocity in the research and promote social justice. The participatory design aimed to consciously and explicitly position the researcher alongside adopted young people in an attempt to minimise issues of power and place central importance on the experiences of a population traditionally marginalised in research. By involving the population in the research design, it was hoped that the research would lead to changes in the practice of supporting adopted young people when starting secondary school, thus “giving back to the community that provides the data” (Mertens, 2015, p.31).

3.3 Research Purpose

Owing to a paucity of research gathering the views of adopted young people and their parents, this research had an exploratory purpose that aimed to develop an increased understanding of how this population experience and make sense of starting secondary school. By adopting this purpose the findings can subsequently be utilised to inform future research or practice (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The researcher has also acknowledged the historic marginalisation of the voices of adopted young people and their parents. By exploring the views of these two groups and involving them in the research design, the research also had an emancipatory purpose which aimed to create opportunities for empowerment and bring about positive change (Robson & McCartan, 2016). By giving a voice to this population, an additional purpose of the research was one of advocacy and thus it was hoped that the research would foster self-development and self-determination in participants, active collaboration in the

research process and a focus on bringing about change in practice (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998, as cited in Robson & McCartan, 2016).

3.4 Research Design

Owing to the epistemological position held by the researcher, the current research employed a qualitative design as this was deemed to offer greater flexibility to explore a little understood area (Mertens, 2015; Willig, 2013). More specifically, this design ensured open-ended and inductive research which was participant-led with detailed exploration of different concepts and perspectives when they arose (Willig, 2013). It was hoped that gathering subjective personal data would support a deeper understanding of the experience of starting secondary school from the perspective of adoptive families.

3.4.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is an inductive qualitative approach to research which is “committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p.1) without this experience being expressed according to pre-determined categories. It therefore works to uncover subjective reports of an individual’s experience, rather than objective information. In this way, capturing rich and detailed data which reflects the depth of a lived experience is central to IPA research with the experience of starting secondary school deemed to be a significant experience for both the young people and their parents. IPA therefore acknowledges that when a person engages with an experience, they “engage in a considerable amount of reflecting, thinking and feeling as they

work through what it means” (Smith et al., 2009, p.3) and thus IPA seeks to explore this further.

IPA has three key philosophical underpinnings; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography, which are now described in turn. The process of conducting IPA in the current research is discussed in section 3.8.

3.4.1.1 Phenomenology.

As described by Smith et al. (2009), “phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience” (p.11) and whilst there are different emphases amongst phenomenologists, the commonality refers to the desire to explore how an individual makes sense of their own subjective experience (Smith et al., 2009).

The approach draws on phenomenological philosophers and the ideas of introspection and reflection on one’s own consciousness in order to focus on and understand an experience. Husserl was particularly interested in finding out how an individual might come to know their own experience and its essential qualities by stepping out of that everyday experience and adopting a “phenomenological attitude” to examine perception (Smith et al., 2009). He argued that to truly attend to an experience, we must attempt to put our previous knowledge aside, in order to minimise its influence on our interpretation of the current experience. This ‘bracketing’ enables us to focus on each element of the current experience in its own right (Smith et al., 2009).

Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Satre moved away from Husserl’s transcendental approaches. Instead they considered the interpretative emphasis in phenomenology, questioning whether it was truly possible to

bracket previous experiences. Heidegger argued for the concept of 'inter-subjectivity'; that a particular experience cannot be detached from our engagement in the world and thus an individual is a 'person-in-context' (Smith et al., 2009). In this way humans attempt to make sense of an experience by drawing on previous knowledge in order to interpret what has happened (Smith et al., 2009). This view of understanding experience as a mental and personal process means that any attempt to understand another's experience will rely on interpreting how the individual attempts to make meaning (Smith et al., 2009).

3.4.1.2 Hermeneutics.

Originating from Bible study, the second underpinning of IPA is hermeneutics or the theory and practice of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is an interpretative phenomenological approach which attempts to understand individual experience as close as possible whilst also recognising that this involves interpretation from both the researcher and the individual themselves.

Hermeneutics also recognises the active role of the researcher in creating meaning. Exploring an individual's experience will be dependent upon what that individual shares which will then be interpreted by the researcher to inform their own understanding. The researcher is therefore "engaged in a double hermeneutic because the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (Smith et al., 2009, p.3).

This highlights the dual role of the researcher as both like and unlike the participant. Like the participant, the researcher is a human-being and is making sense of the world. Unlike the participant, the researcher does not have direct access to the experience and therefore sees the participant's experience through their own 'lens' influenced by their own knowledge and experiences.

The researcher therefore aims to understand the experience through both empathising and questioning (Smith et al., 2009).

3.4.1.3 The Hermeneutic Circle.

The hermeneutic circle describes the dynamic processes of interpretation in that to understand any given part, it is necessary to look to the whole and, to understand the whole, an individual must first look at the parts before returning to the whole in a cyclical process (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore when conducting IPA and attempting to make sense of the experience being described, the analysis is iterative, in that the researcher will move between different ways of thinking about the data rather than analysing it in a linear fashion. By moving between different but related levels of data, the researcher is able to explore varying perspectives on the parts of the data and their coherence with the whole (Smith et al., 2009).

3.4.1.4 Idiography.

As described by Smith et al. (2009), “idiography is concerned with the particular” (p.29) and therefore the emphasis is placed on interpreting individual examples on a deeper level as opposed to generalisation to the wider population. This idiographic commitment operates on two levels moving from a detailed analysis of what an experience was like for an individual through to exploring what a particular experience was like for a particular group of people in a particular context. For this reason, IPA often involves a small homogenous sample. This idiographic underpinning allows for an exploration of similarities and differences between cases whilst ensuring individual experiences continue to be heard (Smith et al., 2009).

3.4.1.5 Limitations of IPA.

As with any methodology, there are limitations to the use of IPA. IPA relies on the use of certain data collection techniques which allow participants to express their experiences using language. These methods therefore assume that language is enough to capture the specific experience being explored (Willig, 2013). If a researcher were to subscribe to a discourse analytic view, it could be argued that language constructs reality rather than describing it, such that the experience is described in a way which is dependent upon the words chosen at the time. Therefore the data gathered through an interview would provide more evidence about how “an individual talks about a particular experience within a particular context, than about the experience itself” (Willig, 2013, p.94).

Nonetheless, as the researcher has acknowledged a social constructionist position, the current research did not seek to know an objective real experience, but instead explore how it is constructed and made sense of through language.

A further limitation considers the suitability of the accounts gathered. IPA approaches rely on the memory and perceptions of the participants, how they choose to convey these perceptions and how successfully they are able to do so. Additionally, whilst IPA generates rich data about experiences, it does not explain the reasons for these experiences and why they involve what they do, limiting the generalisability of the conclusions drawn. Nonetheless, the current research did not aim to produce wide generalisations and instead aimed to focus on the lived experience of a small group of adopted young people and their parents.

3.4.2 Participatory Design

Both the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989) and the SEND Code of Practice 2015 (DfE, DoH 2015) state that adults should gather the views of children and involve them in decisions made, regardless of additional needs. The researcher believes this should also be true for both the design of and participation in research and thus a participatory design was deemed able to actualise these rights whilst also addressing the historic marginalisation of adopted young people in previous research (Aldridge, 2017; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015).

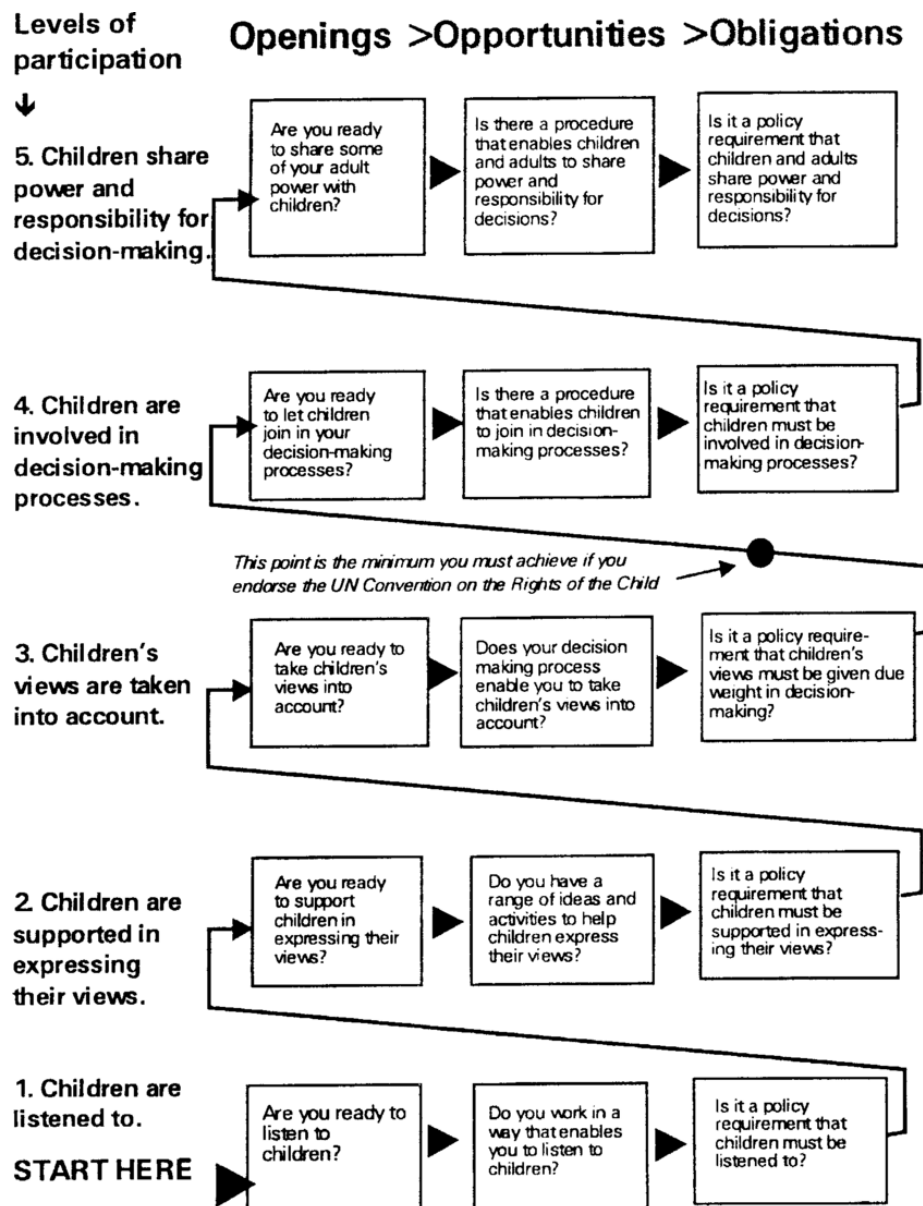
Participatory designs are characterised by the involvement of the target population in the design of the research (Mertens, 2015; Robson & McCartan, 2016) and therefore aim to address power imbalances and ensure transparency in the research process (Aldridge, 2017). The current research aimed to emphasise the role of adopted young people in carrying out their own research alongside an external researcher. Whilst it was acknowledged that such collaboration may result in power of decisions regarding the research design being lost by the researcher (Robson & McCartan, 2016), it would also increase the community validity of the research as it had been designed by the community themselves (Staley, 2009).

When deciding on the level of participation to be employed, the need to balance the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants with the importance of active and meaningful participation was considered. Shier (2001) offers one model to depict the degree of involvement of CYP in decisions made about them, ranging from non-participation in which children are afforded little or no voice to shared power and responsibility for decision-making (see Figure 3.1). Whilst the current research was adult-initiated, decisions regarding the research

questions and research techniques were undertaken collaboratively with adopted young people, therefore ensuring they were consulted and involved in aspects of the decision-making. Owing to the limited target population in the LA and the sensitivity of the information to be collected, it was decided to exclude the research consultants from data collection and analysis procedures in order to ensure participant anonymity. However, the steps taken to ensure Year 9 pupils were active agents in the research design ensured an inclusive outcome which strived for social change (Aldridge, 2017) and was considered to meet Level 5 of Shier's (2001) model.

Figure 3.1

Pathways to Participation (Shier, 2001)



Whilst most participatory approaches involve the participants themselves in the research design, the current research employed two separate groups with Year 9 pupils involved in the research design (the 'research consultants') and Year 7 pupils representing the participants. Lansdown (2005) offers a distinction between the levels of engagement of consultation and participatory processes.

Consultation recognises the perspectives and experiences of CYP as being valuable and different to those held by adults and thus useful in influencing policies and practices which directly affect the CYP themselves. Participatory processes move beyond consultation to create a partnership between adults and CYP so that they are actively involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of research. Consultation becomes participatory when CYP identify the questions to be asked, share decisions regarding methods, take on the role of researchers and engage in discussions about the results and their implications.

By adopting elements of both a consultation and a participatory approach, it was acknowledged that adopted young people in Year 9 had previously experienced secondary transition and therefore may have had views about the experience which they wanted to explore that were different to the ideas held by the researcher (Kellett, 2005). In this way, the research aimed to minimise any bias created by the researcher's individual context whilst simultaneously providing the opportunity for Year 9 pupils to reflect on their own personal transition experiences and develop research skills (Mertens, 2015). Further detail regarding the role of the research consultants is included in section 3.7.1.

3.5 Research Consultants and Participants

The research was undertaken across two neighbouring LAs with one being the area in which the researcher was on placement. It was acknowledged that, whilst the research was not conducted for the benefit of the LA, by taking place inside the authority, researcher bias in favour of the LA may have occurred.

Moreover, it was acknowledged that parent participants may have viewed the researcher as representing the LA, therefore potentially impacting on the information provided.

In order to recruit both research consultants and participants, the researcher contacted the LA Adoption Service to ascertain whether it would be possible to send details of the research to all adoptive parents on the service database. An information sheet summarising the research was sent and parents asked to contact the researcher directly if they were interested in either themselves or their children being involved (Appendix 8). Once an expression of interest had been received, information sheets and consent forms were sent directly to parents (Appendices 9-13). Whilst there is no legal requirement to gain consent from CYP under the age of 16, it was deemed that there was a moral and person-centred duty to inform the young people of the research aims and expectations and thus seek informed consent for involvement. Information sheets and consent forms were modified to ensure the content was accessible for the research consultants and year 7 participants.

Once signed consent forms had been received, Head Teachers of the relevant schools were contacted in order to inform them of the details of the research and thus seek permission for the sessions to be undertaken on their school premises (Appendix 14).

In recruiting both research consultants and participants, specific criteria (see Table 3.1) were used to ensure authenticity of response and a greater depth of information related to the research question (Collins, 2010, as cited in Mertens, 2015). By selecting participants according to these criteria, a purposive

sampling technique was used (Willig, 2013). This was done to ensure the three groups were homogenous in the extent that they shared the adoptive status and had experienced moving to secondary school either directly (children) or indirectly (parents). Year 9 pupils were recruited as research consultants as they had previously undergone secondary transition and were deemed able to generate possible areas to explore during data collection. It was recognised that the population of adopted young people in secondary schools is small and therefore by selecting two separate year groups for consultants and participants it was hoped there would be no existing relationships between those involved which would compromise confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 3.1

Recruitment Criteria

Research Consultants	Year 7 Participants	Parent Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 9 at the time of the group • Adopted before the age of 10 years (DfE (2019a) statistics on age of adoption) • Attending a mainstream secondary school in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 7 at the time of the interview • Adopted before the age of 10 years (DfE (2019a) statistics on age of adoption) • Attending a mainstream secondary school in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had a child in Year 7 of a mainstream secondary school in one of two neighbouring LAs • Adopted the child prior to them reaching 10 years (DfE (2019a))

<p>one of two neighbouring LAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good level of communication • School was aware of the adopted status 	<p>one of two neighbouring LAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good level of communication • School was aware of the adopted status 	<p>statistics on age of adoption)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School was aware of the adopted status of the child
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It was not possible to establish the exact number of adopted pupils in Year 7 or Year 9 attending mainstream secondary schools across the LA as there is no one database which holds this information. Instead it is up to parents to disclose the adopted status to the school. By adopting a convenience sampling technique which was dependent upon parents replying to the initial request, it is acknowledged that it was not possible to generalise the findings beyond the context of the current research. Nonetheless, when undertaking research within the constructivist paradigm, Denzin & Lincoln (2011) argue that every case is both an example of a general phenomenon as well as being unique to that individual. Through describing the context of the research and the assumptions made throughout, it is for the reader to decide upon the applicability of one set of findings to another context, known as transferability (Mertens, 2015).

Two male Year 9 pupils attending the same mainstream secondary school were recruited as research consultants. In total five participants were recruited, consisting of two Year 7 – parent pairings and one additional Year 7 participant. Table 3.2 summarises the participant details with the names being pseudonyms chosen by each individual in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Difficulties in recruiting participants were experienced owing to the nature of participant group and the sometimes undisclosed nature of the adoptive status, either to the child themselves or to the child's school. In addition, several prospective adoptive families who had expressed an early interest in research participation later chose not to be involved as the young people were finding the start of secondary school to be a challenging experience with the added stress of a research interview considered too overwhelming. Nonetheless, the number of participants was deemed sufficient to develop meaningful interpretations of the experience of starting secondary school and was in line with existing literature on IPA methods (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Table 3.2

Participant Details

Participant	Participant Group	Relationship	Gender
"Emma"	Year 7	Anne's Daughter	Female
"Violet"	Year 7	Jessica's Daughter	Female
"Daniel"	Year 7	No Relations	Male
"Anne"	Parent	Emma's Mother	Female
"Jessica"	Parent	Violet's Mother	Female

3.6 Research Techniques

When deciding upon the research techniques, the researcher must consider the research questions, purpose of the study, participant characteristics and time available. There are various methods which lend themselves to collecting the

detailed experiential data to which IPA is best suited, including interviews, diaries (audio, video or written), focus groups and observations (Smith et al., 2009; Willig, 2013). Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) are the most widely used technique as they enable the researcher to enter the personal lived experience of the participant and facilitate the discussion of stories, thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon being explored. By including some elements of structure in the interview, the interviewer is able to maintain control of the topics discussed whilst still providing participants with the opportunity to reflect on their experience and develop their ideas as appropriate (Willig, 2013). It is therefore essential that questions are open-ended and non-directive to allow the participant to share their life world, with focused questions only used to pick-up on something that has already been said, rather than to clarify understanding (Smith et al., 2009; Willig, 2013). The participant is therefore treated as the expert in the experience and must be afforded as much freedom in speaking as is possible.

For the purposes of the current research, SSIs were chosen as the most appropriate method to gain insight into individual experiences and were considered more practical than diary methods which may not have enabled the depth of data achieved through interviews. Moreover, by conducting these interviews on an individual basis, participants were able to tell their personal and sometimes sensitive stories without being affected by the presence of other individuals as would be the case with focus groups. The interviews also served as a tool within which to develop a relationship between the participant and the researcher, minimise the power imbalance and encourage the participant to speak at length. Beaver (2011) discusses the importance of establishing this

rapport with a positive relationship resulting in the participant feeling more inclined to engage with the interviewer.

Interview schedules were designed in collaboration with the research consultants prior to the interviews taking place (see section 3.7.1). These schedules were designed to explore the experience of starting secondary school using clear, and succinct questions which provided participants with the opportunity to speak at length about their experiences (Appendices 17 & 18). It was acknowledged that researcher bias can be problematic for research which involves people (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and can arise from the use of leading questions by the researcher. Therefore attempts were made to avoid leading questions and allow participants to express their experiences using their own language. Moreover, the schedule allowed the researcher to be flexible in the questions asked as well as plan for any potential difficulties, including the phrasing of complex or sensitive questions or reluctance amongst participants (Smith et al., 2009). Prompts were used to encourage participants to expand on their responses (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Smith et al., 2009).

3.7 Procedures

Table 3.3 outlines the stages of the research.

Table 3.3*Chronology of Procedures in the Research*

Date	Activity
July 2019 – October 2019	<p>Recruitment – advert distributed to all adoptive families on the LA Adoption Service database. Recruitment of research consultants and participants occurred simultaneously.</p> <p>Recruitment – parental consent sought. Permission from Headteachers sought once parental consent had been obtained.</p>
October 2019	Preparation for session with research consultants.
November 2019	Research consultant session – one 90 minute session to finalise research questions, research technique and interview questions.
November 2019 – December 2019	Data collection – participants interviewed using SSIs undertaken either in schools where participants attended (two Year 7 participants) or at participant's homes (1 year 7 participant, 2 parent participants).

December 2019 – January 2020	Verbatim transcription of interview data.
January 2020 – February 2020	Data analysis using IPA procedures.

3.7.1 Research Consultant Session

Two research consultants were involved in the process of research design. Confirmation that the school was willing to organise a suitable time and an uninterrupted familiar area for the session to take place was sought prior to the session being conducted. The researcher met with the two consultants together using a session plan (Appendix 15) which had been designed using two separate sources (Kellelt, 2005; Kim et al., 2017). The session lasted approximately 90 minutes and began with general conversation to help establish rapport. The researcher clarified the reasons for the session, what the session would involve and reminders regarding confidentiality, safeguarding and the right to withdraw. Consultants were offered the opportunity to ask questions before being asked for verbal assent to continue.

The session covered a general introduction to research before discussing the specific research topic and proposed research question which was agreed through collaborative discussion. Input on two possible data collection methods was then provided; SSIs and visual methods; including possible uses, advantages and disadvantages. Following discussion, consultants selected the

use of a SSI accompanied by offering Year 7 participants the opportunity to draw a picture of their primary and secondary schools and themselves.

Collaborative discussion alongside the checklist for designing a SSI schedule (Kim et al., 2017) were used to generate the specific questions to be asked during the data collection phase. Ideas were sought from the consultants (Appendix 16) and checked by the researcher to ensure the questions were appropriate, open and free from opinion, leading language or ideas which may cause distress to the participants. To ensure the questions met this criteria, consultants were encouraged to interview one another and reflect on the questions asked. This resulted in some questions being combined and broadened with certain key words being included as prompts to be used only if the interviewee was finding it difficult to answer. For example, questions on the new secondary school environment, increased independence and meeting new people were combined and broadened to refer to 'the differences at secondary school' with these individual aspects being included as additional prompts. In addition, this group discussion resulted in questions around what helped the transition experience being broken down to explore separately the support provided by the primary and secondary school as well as by family and friends.

As part of the interview practice the possibility of including a question on sharing the adoptive status was raised by one research consultant. This resulted in a question aimed at gathering opinions on sharing the status in schools being included in the final interview schedules for both Year 7 and parent participants. Through this discussion research consultants offered advice on what they wished had happened for them on starting secondary school. For this reason, a question which provided participants with an opportunity to provide advice to

other adoptive young people soon to start secondary education was included in the final interview schedule for Year 7 participants.

For ethical reasons, it was decided not to include a question which explored early childhood experiences in order to avoid causing any distress or harm to participants. It was instead assumed that participants had experienced early disruption to their childhood experiences both in order for the adoption to take place as well as due to the permanency procedures.

At the end of the session, research consultants were informed about the next steps of the research, as well as the potential for their future involvement in the dissemination of findings (Chapter 5). They were then provided with a small certificate in recognition of their involvement alongside debriefing information.

The researcher arranged one practice interview with a colleague in order to practise interviewing skills and obtain feedback on the questions and process. For the purpose of this practice interview, the interviewee was asked to think about a young person in Year 7, either adopted or not-adopted, who they had worked with recently and to answer the questions in the way this individual might do. This process resulted in a general descriptive question around the experience being included at the start of the interview schedules and a greater focus being placed on exploring thoughts and feelings throughout. The interviewee reported that the questions asked had covered a wide range of areas and had not been leading or constraining in any way.

3.7.2 Data Collection

Interviews were undertaken during the second half of the Autumn term following the transition to secondary school in September 2019. This was done to allow

time for participants to become accustomed to secondary school and able to reflect on the experience without it being too long to think back. Whilst the researcher aimed to conduct the interviews with Year 7 participants in school to provide environmental prompts, this was not possible for one Year 7 participant who was interviewed at home.

For those participants interviewed at school, confirmation that the schools were willing to organise a suitable time and location for the interviews was sought prior to data collection being conducted. For those participants interviewed at home, suitable dates and times were organised directly with either the participants (if parents) or with the parent of the Year 7 participant. Interviews were conducted in quiet familiar rooms where participants would not be interrupted or overheard and began with a general rapport building conversation. Prior to asking the first question, the researcher clarified the information presented on the participant information sheet and consent form. Year 7 participants were also informed that they were likely to do most of the talking and there were no correct or incorrect responses to the questions asked. Participants were offered the opportunity to ask any questions before then being asked for verbal assent to continue.

During the interviews, the researcher aimed for a neutral stance in order to avoid showing approval, disapproval or agreement with the information the participants expressed. Year 7 participants were offered the opportunity to draw a picture of themselves at school, both to build rapport with the researcher as well as serve as a point of reference to facilitate and prompt the verbal discussion. For example, one participant drew a notable size difference between the primary and secondary school which she later referred back to

during the interview. This worked to enhance the shared understanding between the participant and the researcher and led to an interpretation which represented the information provided by the participant. One Year 7 participant appeared anxious about attending the interview and so a more supportive and structured approach to interviewing was initially utilised in order to help the participant feel more at ease. Closed questions were used to support the participant in becoming familiar with the situation, before open questions were then reintroduced.

Following conclusion of the interviews, participants were provided with debriefing information. Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder in order to capture a true account of the information before being transcribed verbatim by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and data protection.

3.8 Data Analysis

Owing to the experiential focus of the research question, the epistemological position of the researcher and the data gathered, IPA was deemed the most appropriate method of analysis. The stages of the IPA process outlined by Smith et al. (2009) were followed. This involved analysing each interview separately before bringing all interviews together to look for patterns across cases. Appendix 22 provides an example of this data analysis process for one participant.

- *Stage 1: Reading and re-reading*

This stage involved the researcher immersing herself in the original data through both repeated listening to the audio files and reading of the

transcripts. Recollections from each interview and initial impressions of the transcript were recorded in order to 'bracket' these ideas.

- *Step 2: Initial noting*

This stage involved exploring the use of and meanings of language and making comments down the right-hand side of the transcript. These comments were descriptive (described things which matter to the participant), linguistic (explored the way in which language was used) and conceptual (interpretative comments which moved away from explicit claims to explore the participant's understanding of the world). In generating these conceptual comments, the researcher's own experiences and psychological knowledge were drawn on.

This interpretative process was found to be more challenging when analysing the transcripts from the adoptive parent participants, potentially due to the interpretation which had already taken place by the parents prior to speaking with the researcher. It was therefore acknowledged that the parents may have interpreted and presented their experiences in a way which avoided any possible judgement by the researcher. Conversely, this process of conceptual commenting on the transcripts from Year 7 participants was found to be easier, possibly due to these individuals speaking about their secondary school experiences more directly with less concern about the potential for judgement by the researcher.

- *Step 3: Developing emergent themes*

This stage involved using the comments written during step 2 to look for emergent themes which represented what was important in each section of

the transcript. In doing this, small sections were worked on at any one time, thus breaking up the narrative flow of the interview in line with the hermeneutic circle.

- *Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes*

This stage involved mapping how the emergent themes fitted together. In conducting this stage, each emergent theme was written on a separate post-it note with any duplication removed. A 'numeration' strategy was used in which the frequency of each theme was recorded in order to indicate its relevant importance and thus help to identify any patterns. Themes were then spread out and grouped together into higher order themes using a strategy of 'abstraction' in which a cluster of themes was given a name which became the superordinate theme. Moreover, a 'subsumption' strategy was also used in which one emergent theme became the superordinate theme for a group of themes. Any themes deemed irrelevant to the research question or encapsulated by a different theme were disregarded, after first checking back with the original transcript to ensure any connections to the research question had not been missed. A summary table of the themes, line numbers and key words was then created for each transcript in order to explore the gestalt which was developed through the analysis process. Appendix 25 contains the summary tables for all participants.

- *Step 5: Moving to the next case*

In line with the idiographic principle of IPA research, each transcript was analysed individually with stage 5 involving moving to the next transcript and repeating the steps above. To ensure each transcript was explored

individually, the researcher attempted to 'bracket' ideas from each case before moving to the next by making notes in the research diary. Despite this bracketing, it was acknowledged that ideas from one interview would influence subsequent analyses owing to changes in the researcher's assumptions. To minimise this influence, analysis of child and parent interviews were alternated.

- *Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases*

This stage involved looking for patterns across the interviews in order to explore whether there were any higher-order concepts shared between participants. A similar process to step 4 was used in which all themes were brought together to form a new set of superordinate and subordinate themes which represented more than 50% of participants. This process was initially conducted separately on the themes from the Year 7 participants and the themes from the parent participants; however, the researcher considered there to be no benefit to this approach with this separation not improving the overall themes which emerged. For this reason, the two data sets were combined and analysed together due to similarities across both Year 7 and parent participants. During this stage of the analysis, some superordinate-subordinate pairings were separated to form different groups and some remained intact. A summary table was then created to illustrate the groupings.

The findings from the analysis are reported in Chapter 4.

3.9 Issues of Validity

To ensure the testimonial validity of the current research, consultation skills were used to observe participants during the interviews and judge whether they felt understood by the researcher. Catalytic validity was deemed to have been ensured if the research process produced change, growth or empowerment in the participants (Stiles, 1999). This was evidenced throughout the interviews when participants were observed to pause and comment on the questions asked, including that they had thought about something not previously considered. The debriefing process further established catalytic validity by encouraging participants to informally reflect on the interview. Finally, by conducting the interviews and transcribing the audio recordings, the researcher became immersed in the data, thus providing evidence of increased descriptive validity (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

As qualitative research is interested in subjective experiences it cannot have generalisability or reliability, instead being judged through its trustworthiness. Four criteria have been proposed for judging trustworthiness; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 2011).

To increase credibility (that the topic was accurately described from the participants themselves), participants were encouraged to lead the discussions with feedback sought from the researcher acting as 'member-checks' of what had been heard. Open follow-up questions which utilised the participant's own words were asked to minimise the impact of the researcher's subjective interpretation on the participants. However, the researcher found this more challenging when interviewing Year 7 participants, who frequently relied on the questions from the researcher to engage in discussion. To increase

confirmability, whereby the interpretations of the data are linked to the raw data, participants were viewed as the experts in their experience and thus the researcher was present to find out the knowledge held by participants. Data was collected in the form of audio recordings which ensured that all the information provided by participants was captured accurately rather than relying on subjective interpretative notes made by the researcher. Repeated engagement with the raw data and inclusion of quotes in the research write-up further served to enhance confirmability and increase transparency in the analysis process (Yardley, 2000).

To further evidence transparency in the procedures used, an audit trail detailing all activities undertaken from data collection to analysis was kept (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and included the raw audio data, transcripts, subsequent analysis and a research journal containing the researcher's reflections. Additionally, sharing the analysis with the researcher's supervisor helped to ensure transparency in how the data was interpreted and minimise the risk of researcher bias which could have resulted from direct contact with the participants. Regular supervision was sought throughout the research process in order to enhance its trustworthiness and reflect on any potential researcher bias and ethical issues that arose.

3.9.1 Reflexivity

Whilst the researcher attempted to understand the experience of starting secondary school from the perspectives of the participants, the influence of the researchers own interpretations was also acknowledged (Willig, 2013). To support the trustworthiness of the research, the researcher was therefore required to be reflexive throughout by engaging in continual reflection on how

personal assumptions could influence the research process, the reactions to the research context and the interpretations of the data (Finlay, 2002; Willig, 2013). This reflection involved continuous re-engagement with the raw data, reflective supervision with the research supervisor and upkeep of a research diary (Appendix 26). These measures supported the reflexive validity of the research by allowing the researcher to reflect on whether the data gathered resulted in new thinking around the experience of starting secondary school.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

All research involving people has the potential to cause harm and therefore must ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to minimise any possible negative impacts. In conducting this research, the researcher was informed by the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code Human Research Ethics (2014), the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2012) and the University Ethics Guidelines (University of East London (UEL), 2015).

Ethical approval to conduct the research was provided by UEL's Ethics Committee (Appendices 27 & 28). Permission was also sought from the Senior Leadership Teams of the EPSs in the LAs where the research was conducted.

3.10.1 Informed Consent and Right to Withdraw

Informed consent was sought from all consultants and participants prior to sessions taking place through the use of relevant information sheets and consent forms which individuals were required to read and sign (Appendices 9-13). For consultants and Year 7 participants, informed consent from parents

was also sought. The content of these information sheets was further reiterated verbally at the beginning of the interviews/session. Participants were informed they had a three-week time period from the date of the interview to withdraw from the research, after which their anonymous data would be used. This information was also included on the participant debrief letter alongside the researcher's contact details (Appendices 19-21) and verbally explained to participants following the completion of the interview. Parents were also advised they could withdraw their child's data during this period.

3.10.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

During all sessions only the researcher and participant/consultants were present to ensure confidentiality. Individuals were informed that any information provided would be treated as confidential; however, Year 7 participants and consultants were also informed that any information, which resulted in the researcher having concerns about the safety of any individual, would be shared with the designated safeguarding lead in the school.

Following data collection the information was anonymised through the use of pseudonyms chosen by each participant. The names of any schools, individuals, or the LA were also changed at the point of data transcription. All participants were informed of the anonymisation procedures as well as the need to provide anonymised transcripts to the research supervisor and other professionals involved in the researcher's examination. Whilst attempts were made to anonymise the data, two Year 7 interviews took place in schools and were arranged with a member of school staff, making it possible to identify participants within their school contexts. It must also be acknowledged that

participants may have shared their involvement in the research with other individuals outside the researcher's control.

3.10.3 Data Protection

University, local and national data protection policies were adhered to at all times. All information gathered, including consent forms and audio recordings were stored digitally on a password protected removable drive as well as in encrypted files on UEL storage facilities. Audio files were stored separately from consent forms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were made aware that consent forms and audio recordings would be destroyed upon completion of the research and anonymous transcripts would be stored to allow for possible research publication.

3.10.4 Vulnerability of Participant Group and Protection from Harm

It was acknowledged that the research area had the potential to evoke challenging or distressing memories regarding experiences of school transition. As a result, the researcher took steps to safeguard participants and consultants through the creation of a relaxed environment and the adoption of a non-confrontational interviewing style. Additionally, information sheets outlined the right to express a wish not to answer any questions asked by the researcher or to halt the session entirely with this information reiterated verbally at the beginning of the session.

The risk of potential harm to the researcher was also considered before any data collection was undertaken. When data collection was conducted in schools, the researcher was aware of relevant health and safety and safeguarding policies. The risk of harm was considered minimal as a member of

staff was aware of the time and location of the interview. One Year 7 participant was interviewed at home in agreement with the parent who remained in the house throughout. Similarly, parent participants were offered either an office location or home visit for the interview in order to ensure their safety and comfort throughout the process. Where a home visit was undertaken, the EPS's Lone Working policy was followed at all times.

3.10.5 Debriefing and Duty of Care

Following the sessions, all consultants and participants were provided with the relevant debrief sheet (Appendices 19-21). These debrief sheets included details of local and national support groups for parents, and details of a member of school staff with whom the young people could speak to should the session have caused any distress. This member of staff had been involved in organising the session and was either the SENDCo or the DT. The researcher also spoke through the debrief sheet with each consultant or participant so as to ensure a duty of care was maintained following data collection.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the purpose of the research alongside the ontological and epistemological positions held by the researcher and therefore why the qualitative method of IPA was deemed to be most appropriate. The participatory design of the research as well as the procedures for recruiting participants, data collection and data analysis have been explained. Due consideration has also been paid to the trustworthiness of the research and the ethical considerations. The next chapter will present the findings from the IPA process.

Chapter 4 - Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter outlined the methodology and research techniques which were used to elicit and analyse the data in this research. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the findings that emerged from the process of IPA. In presenting these findings the researcher has chosen to use an idiographic presentation which involves describing findings from each participant rather than by theme before then presenting the shared meanings across participants. Quotes are used to illustrate the themes generated through the analysis.

4.2 Individual Interview Findings

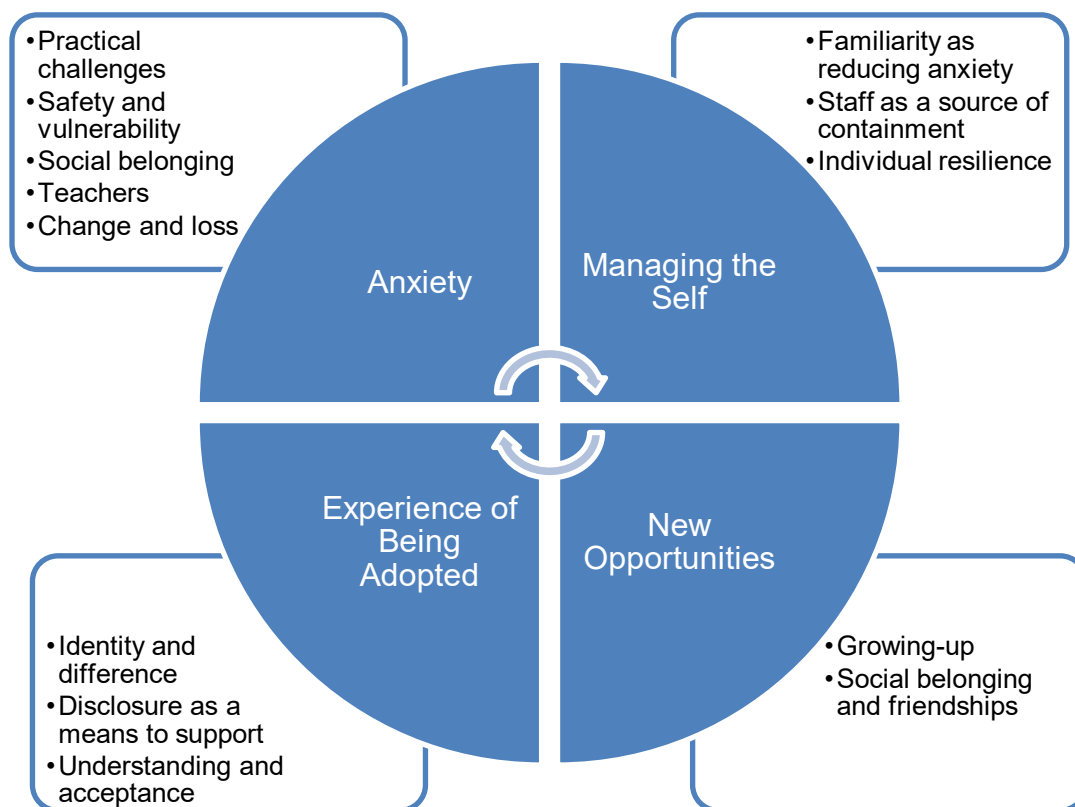
4.2.1 *Emma*

Emma was a female child in Year 7 of a small Catholic secondary school.

Figure 4.1 provides a summary of the themes from Emma's interview.

Figure 4.1

Themes from Emma's Interview



4.2.1.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Anxiety.

The following themes were all deemed to emphasise Emma's anxieties when starting secondary school.

4.2.1.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Practical Challenges.

Emma described the increased size of secondary school compared to primary school alongside the need to navigate the building to find her lessons.

“Like you can’t find anything! So I had like four tours like of the school but every time I had to ask my friend where everything is ‘cos I kept forgetting” (85-87).

“There wasn’t at the start though, I didn’t know where anything was. I only knew where to get break and lunch that’s it, I didn’t know where any of my lessons were” (386-388).

The exclamation in her tone alongside the use of *“kept forgetting”* implies that these practical challenges persisted over time despite frequent opportunities to learn the school layout. Emma’s use of the phrase *“there wasn’t at the start though”* was referring to the lack of ‘good things’ at secondary school when she first started, indicating her unfamiliarity with the practical aspects of the school environment to be a source of anxiety for her.

4.2.1.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Safety and Vulnerability.

Emma spoke about the social environment she encountered at secondary school:

“Cos I feel that I’m gonna get killed or something out here. Like I’m just gonna be squished, I’m like so small” (403-404).

Emma’s use of the phrase *“out here”* was interpreted to indicate a perception of the school corridors as like the wilderness where she felt concerned about her safety as a result of the actions of others. Earlier in the interview, she spoke about the *“thousands and thousands of people”* (7) and her belief that *“I would be like this small and everyone be much bigger because I’m shorter than*

everyone else” (9-10), emphasising her sense of vulnerability around older pupils at secondary school.

4.2.1.1.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Social Belonging.

When asked about whether there had been any challenges starting secondary school, Emma shared:

“Yeah, trying to make friends. ‘Cos I’m scared that like people will just say no, like I asked someone if they could be my friend in primary school and they just said ‘no’, like so rude, they wouldn’t like it if I said it to them” (142-146).

Similarly, the following comment also demonstrates her social belonging to be a source of anxiety for her.

“I was scared when I got here because like, it’s like, it’s new school, new people, I have to make new friends” (79-80).

Her use of the phrase *“have to make”* suggests this to be an essential part of starting a new school rather than a choice, therefore placing additional pressure on herself to fit in socially.

4.2.1.1.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Teachers.

Emma also spoke about her anxiety-provoking expectations of secondary school teachers, mentioning her construction to be one of strictness and shouting.

“You think it’s gonna be like a horror movie or something but it’s actually not, it’s actually really nice ‘cos people are really nice to you when you start, like they don’t just scream at you” (298-300).

This use of the phrase “*horror movie*” suggests her expectation of secondary school to be one of continuous fear, comprising of loud noises and experiences that could not be predicted in advance. Indeed, she later expressed feeling “*stressed*” (391) through fear of being “*told off*” (392) when arriving late to a lesson, further emphasising the unpredictable and anxiety-provoking nature of secondary school teachers. Nonetheless the use of the word “*actually*” also indicates a sense of relief that her were not met in reality.

4.2.1.1.5 Subordinate Theme 5: Change and Loss.

When asked to speak about her first day at secondary school, Emma shared:

“I was a bit scared because, like, it’s a much, like, like, it’s like, it’s like, it’s like moving house. You move from a small house to a bigger house” (69-70).

Her difficulties articulating her thoughts alongside the comparison with moving house both emphasise the scale of the school change for Emma, almost as if it involved her entire life moving and the loss of her previous house, the primary school. This sense of loss was expressed again later in the interview when Emma spoke about the loss of the status which comes from being the oldest year group at primary school.

“Yeah then you go down riight down to the lowest. It’s, it’s a bit sad because it like you’re always like, in primary school you’re always used to being at the top, and then you go all the way back to the bottom” (407-411).

4.2.1.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Managing the Self.

The following emergent themes referred to strategies which Emma used to help manage her feelings of anxiety.

4.2.1.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Familiarity as Reducing Anxiety.

Emma spoke about a friend from primary school with whom she had made the transition. This friend’s mother was also a teacher in the secondary school.

“And like, I knew like my friend so, like he knows everything here because he helps his mum here a lot so” (70-72).

She also spoke about the taster days and summer school which had been offered by the secondary school.

“Because then I would know the school a bit better. Like see how the day goes, like when the school’s actually going, ‘cos when I saw it like it wouldn’t, if like no one would be there, it would just be like the Year 7s, so yeah. Like I get to see how the day went when everyone was there, when break was and that” (222-226).

These sources of familiarity appeared reassuring for Emma such that they offered a feeling of containment, predictability and security for her. Indeed her

interview gave an impression that having these connections and knowledge of the school were integral to the positive experience she had had overall.

4.2.1.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Staff as a Source of Containment.

Emma spoke six times about both the emotional and the practical support provided by staff when she became upset or found something difficult to manage.

“I have my LSA in form, she talks to me and helps me a lot. Like, she knows when I’m feeling sad ‘cos she knows me so like when I’m feeling sad, I just talk to her outside and then I tell her what’s wrong and then she tries to help” (42-45).

“If you’re stuck, just ask, they’re not gonna scream at you. Like I couldn’t find my library lesson so I asked and they told me it was upstairs so I went upstairs and I found the library so they didn’t just scream at me, they just told me where it was” (327-330).

Emma’s choice of language and references to school staff emphasise her view of adults as a source of reassurance and support when faced with a school challenge. She did not speak about the support provided by friends, suggesting her adult-attachments to be more significant and thus emphasising her perception of adults as better able to contain her emotions through various forms of support. The use of the phrase “a lot” when speaking about the learning support assistant (LSA) indicates the importance of this member of staff in supporting Emma, with her sentence structure and use of the word “just”

suggesting these conversational exchanges to be part of Emma's daily or weekly routine rather than infrequent experiences.

4.2.1.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Individual Resilience.

Emma often drew on her previous experiences to help manage her anxiety.

"I have to make new friends but I've moved house quite a lot so I've moved around quite a lot so I had to make new friends over and over again" (80-81).

"Quite well because I'd made friends like millions of times. And I'm like, quite good at making friends so. So I do have plenty of friends" (96-97).

Emma used an assertive tone when speaking about her past experiences and strengths, suggesting her to be drawing on her individual resilience in order to manage the challenges she had faced when starting secondary school. Indeed she also expressed a desire to increase her own resilience, indicating her wish to be an independent individual who would prefer to draw on her own internal resources as opposed to becoming dependent on others.

"No not really, like they can't tell me where everything is, I've got to learn myself. Like they can give me a tour and show me where everything is but after that I have to learn myself otherwise I will never know" (193-195).

4.2.1.3 Superordinate Theme 3: New Opportunities.

The following themes illustrated the new opportunities for Emma which had resulted from starting secondary school.

4.2.1.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Growing-Up.

When asked about the 'best part' of starting secondary school, Emma provided the following answer:

"That I got to make new friends, 'cos like in primary school you make friends and then you're friends with them and then they always argue with you so then you're not friends and when you leave the school they're like asking if you can be friends with them again but in secondary school you're here for much longer so you get to, and like people don't argue in secondary school as much because like they grow up a lot so they don't argue which is very good" (104-109).

This quote was interpreted to indicate that Emma had out-grown primary school friendships to the extent that she found these old friendships childish and immature. Her use of the phrase *"that I got to make new friends"* indicates secondary school to offer a fresh start for her where her identity becomes one of greater independence and maturity. Her experience of feeling more 'grown-up' was also evidenced through her comments relating to lunch time:

"Like, you have to, like in primary school, you have to line up to get your food, like you do the same in secondary school but there's like, they choose the meal for you, like you don't even have varied food, like here, like they have like pizza, sausage rolls, vegetarian food, we have like

chips and that. So it's really nice here because there's like puddings and everything (115-119).

Emma used an almost excitable tone when speaking about the variety of food on offer at secondary school and the opportunities to select her own food. Her comparison to the situation at primary school indicates her feeling that she had out-grown primary school and was ready to move on, subsequently enjoying the freedom and new opportunities at secondary school.

4.2.1.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Social Belonging and Friendships.

Emma spoke about the new friendships and relationships she had formed at secondary school:

"Like I'm friends with like loads of girls now but in primary school I was friends with loads of boys" (150-151).

"I'm not as nervous to talk to people 'cos I know who they are. Well not everyone but, I know who plenty of people are, I know who like loads of, a few Year 8s are, so I know who they are. I know, yeah I know like a couple of Year 9s, like a few, a few Year 10s" (341-344).

These references suggest Emma was able to achieve a fresh start moving to secondary school with her sense of social belonging and need for a popular and included identity evident in the second quote. Indeed the change in her friendships from boys to girls indicates her developing identity as a teenage girl who feels a sense of belonging within a group of similar individuals.

4.2.1.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Experience of Being Adopted.

These themes were grouped together as they explored Emma's identity as an adopted child and the outcomes of having such a status.

4.2.1.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Identity and Difference.

Emma recognised and spoke about her identity as an adopted child:

"Children who are adopted don't act normally than everyone else so..."
(23-24).

Her use of the word "*normally*" and the tailing off of her speech suggest that she views her identity as different to children who are not adopted and thus as if she requires understanding and support from others which is different or additional to that provided for those who are not adopted. Similarly when asked how her transition could have been better supported, Emma explained:

"Like in primary school they could have like told the teachers here that I was adopted so that they knew before I got here" (232-233).

By providing this suggestion Emma indicates her adoptive status to be a key aspect of her identity which she believes should be shared. This sharing of her identity could be interpreted as one way of ensuring Emma feels noticed by others and thus not forgotten, a feeling which she may have experienced owing to her historical ACEs. Nonetheless, despite her adoptive status being a key aspect of her identity, Emma also expressed a desire not to receive too much attention.

“I’m happy with the people that know because like if they like if everyone knew, like, they would just be paying attention to me instead of helping people who actually need help... Yeah, no one wants too much attention like someone might like a little attention but like thousands and thousands of people just looking at you that would be too much attention” (465-471).

Her reference to *“too much attention”* indicates that whilst Emma wishes to be noticed and not forgotten, she also does not want to be treated differently to her peers. It is possible that she feels unsure as to what such different treatment might involve therefore offering a source of anxiety, unpredictability and potential social isolation from her peers.

4.2.1.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Disclosure as a Means to Support.

When asked why she would have preferred for secondary school teachers to have been informed about her adoptive status, Emma replied:

*“Like if they, if you didn’t know someone was adopted and then they told you you were adopted, like, they could like help you, like you could have like support and everything, like, have like, like SENCo talk to you or something. Like go to the *SEN SUPPORT AREA*, so go to SEN and that” (36-39).*

Her use of language indicates that without knowing whether someone is adopted, staff would not be able to offer any support and thus Emma would be left feeling unsupported and unnoticed. Thus for Emma, sharing the adoptive status is the only way to ensure that support from adults is in place. Whilst

Emma uses the word *“like”* throughout the interview, her increased use of it in the quote above perhaps indicates a difficulty in articulating her thoughts and a sense of her uncertainty about what would have occurred had her adoptive status not been disclosed.

4.2.1.4.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Understanding and Acceptance.

Emma spoke about the idea of understanding and acceptance of her adoptive status from staff on three occasions.

“Yeah, my teaching assistant knows, in form, she knows, so when we had an assembly on road safety like that, she knew that I didn’t like stuff that was like disgusting so she took me out assembly so, that was ages ago so that was quite good” (455-458).

It appears important for Emma to have someone who knows her, listens to her and understands her as an individual and therefore someone who is proactive in supporting her. Indeed her use of the phrase *“my teaching assistant”* was interpreted to suggest that Emma views this member of staff as present to provide only her with support, thus making it essential that staff understand and accept her Emma’s identity as an adopted child. This was interpreted to reveal Emma’s wish to feel as if she is treated in a special way.

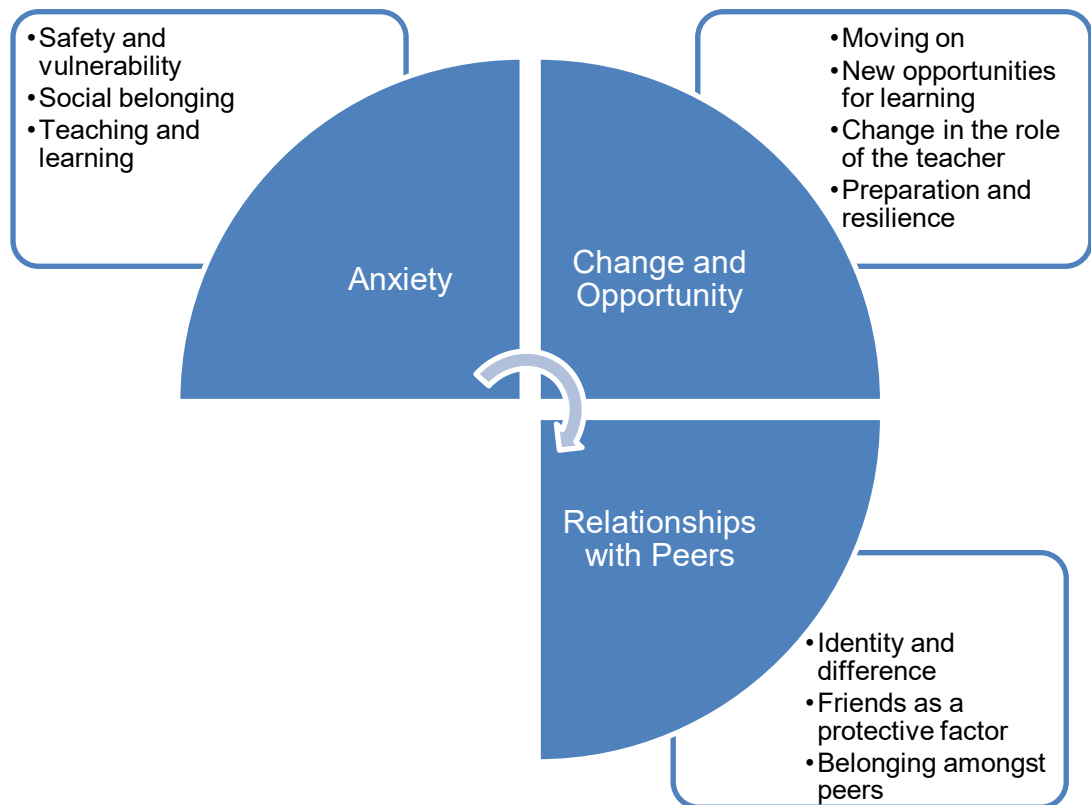
4.2.2 Violet

Violet was a female child in Year 7 of a large mainstream secondary school.

Figure 4.2 provides a summary of the themes from Violet’s interview.

Figure 4.2

Themes from Violet's Interview



4.2.2.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Anxiety.

The following emergent themes referred to the sources of anxiety Violet experienced when she started secondary school.

4.2.2.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Safety and Vulnerability.

When speaking about the changes from primary to secondary school, Violet spoke about her safety and vulnerability on nine occasions.

“You get pushed a lot, in the corridors. Like physically pushed, because of all like the big Year 11s and stuff, they’re like towering over you like ‘aahh’” (23-24).

Her use of the word “*towering*” and the noise to demonstrate her fear (“*aahh*”) was interpreted to indicate Violet to feel small, weak and vulnerable compared to the older students, representing a source of fear which was not present at primary school. Indeed she later speaks about “*bigger kids being intimidating*” (65) and not knowing whether people will be “*nice or horrible*” (374), further illustrating her sense of vulnerability. Stating how “*you’re just like not very, like strong or something*” (31) emphasises how weak and helpless she felt.

4.2.2.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Social Belonging.

Violet described her worries around meeting new people and making new friends.

“I was like, I don’t wanna go anymore, I want to go back to my old school and see all of my friends” (57-58).

Violet’s language implies an uncertainty about starting secondary school due to a lack of established friendships and therefore an increased sense of vulnerability. When later asked to summarise her experience, her use of the phrase “*you go on to it being a bit oooh where do I fit in*” (385) further indicates her need for a sense of social belonging amongst her peers and concerns that this would not be found when moving schools.

4.2.2.1.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Teaching and Learning.

When speaking about the academic side of secondary school, Violet shared:

“Like different classes because they, think they go on for longer ‘cos I only get three lessons in one day but they go on for a very long time and some of the questions and answers and stuff are really like tricky and some of them are really easy” (114-117).

Through speaking about the changes from primary to secondary school, Violet indicates the length of lessons and the academic expectations to be potential sources of anxiety which need adjusting to. Later, when asked how her next term could be improved, Violet shared:

“Teachers being less shouty. They shout at the whole class” (380).

This perhaps indicates teachers to be a source of anxiety for her as, from her phrasing, shouting is frequent and perhaps unpredictable. Such anxiety around unpredictability could be interpreted as reflecting early unpredictable childhood experiences which took place pre-adoption.

4.2.2.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Change and Opportunity.

The following themes explored the significance of the change which occurred when starting secondary school as well as the new opportunities this change provided.

4.2.2.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Moving On.

This theme arose 7 times.

"It was a bit stressful because like you don't want to leave your friends when you go, so like on your last day it's very sad 'cos you all like crying and stuff but when you get there, there's like loads of new people and it's nice to have new people in your life but it's still very hard" (3-6).

Whilst Violet spoke about the sense of moving on as involving an element of loss, she then went on to speak about how this change and loss is almost inevitable.

"Like you meet new people and they become like really kind. Sounds a bit mean but you kinda forget about your other friends, it's sad but like, you forget but they're still there" (15-17).

Whilst evoking a sense of sadness and loss, this change also evoked a sense of excitement. Violet further emphasised the significance of this change through the following comments:

"Amazing really, 'cos it's, it's weird to think that you just gone up like a massive step and then just met loads of new people and like all different classes and some very weird classes" (73-75).

"Knowing that you've moved up 'cos it means like you're getting older. I mean like you're getting older anyway but like, you're going to a new chapter like of your life" (352-354).

Her tone was one of surprise when offering both these comments, providing a sense that she was almost shocked that she had managed to cope with such a significant experience. Her use of the phrase "*new chapter*" indicates her to feel

that she has grown-up and moved on from primary school and her identity is becoming that of a teenager.

4.2.2.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: New Opportunities for Learning.

Violet also spoke about new academic opportunities at secondary school, describing it as “*more of an interesting school, more creative and stuff*” (386-387).

“Like you get to do different things and it’s like much better than primary ‘cos in primary you get shorter lessons and so many lessons! Well that’s what happened in our school. And then you just go on to be like ‘oh god this is going on forever’. Like so many different lessons flashing by but like, if you get three lessons like I do in one day, it makes it nicer ‘cos like you got more time to do whatever you’re doing in class. So it’s exciting” (389-394).

Violet’s use of the words “*more creative*” and “*exciting*” indicate her positivity towards the new opportunities at secondary school. It may be that these opportunities for additional time in lessons help to reduce any anxiety around routines and frequent moving around the school as well as allow her additional time to process the lesson content.

4.2.2.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Change in the Role of the Teacher.

When asked whether there was anything else she wished to share, Violet began speaking about the death of her pet cat which had occurred since

starting secondary school. Whilst this only arose once, her independent generation of the topic meant it was deemed to be important to her.

“We had a fire bell on the day that I lost him, like ‘cos it was a Monday, we had a fire bell and I, I told my form teacher because we line up in our forms in register order and I was in the wrong order. She came up to me and said ‘Violet, I know you’re having a really bad day today but get in the right order’ and I was like ‘I’m having a really bad day, you just made it worse’. Don’t want to be rude to that teacher but” (433-438).

Violet’s comments and the tailing off of her final sentence indicate her to have not felt understood or emotionally supported by this member of staff. It may be that at this time she required the emotional containment more often provided in primary schools. Indeed, she had previously spoken about the role of staff as telling off pupils for behaviour incidents as well as being there to give you “advice” (156) when “someone was being horrible to you, like bullying you” (148). These comments emphasise her view of secondary school staff as sources of practical advice as opposed to the more nurturing role they adopt in primary school.

4.2.2.2.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Preparation and Resilience.

When thinking about how she had managed the changes at secondary school, Violet shared:

“It was nerve-wracking but like you get used to it, yeah, it’s quite easy to get used to ‘cos like you do it every day so yeah” (107-108).

For Violet, the changes appeared almost insignificant; instead, she felt a sense of individual resilience which helped her to deal with her situation. When later asked about whether there was any formal preparation from the primary or secondary school for the transition, Violet used the phrases “*I can’t remember*” (120) and “*not really*” (200), indicating the insignificance of formalised preparation and thus the greater sense of individual resilience.

4.2.2.3 Superordinate Theme 3: Relationships with Peers.

The following themes referenced the importance of peer relationships for Violet.

4.2.2.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Identity and Difference.

Whilst Violet was aware and open about her status as an adopted child, she was also wary about this resulting in her being seen as different to her peers. She spoke about the lack of awareness around adoption amongst her peers and her concerns about her adoptive status giving her a negative sense of difference on over ten occasions.

“Like if someone annoys them they’re saying that they’re adopted. It doesn’t make sense. I don’t know, I think they mean, I think they think that it means that like your parents hate you or something and they want to just chuck you out or something. That’s really not it” (276-280).

Violet’s comments indicate her awareness of her adoptive status in relation to others as well as her concerns that her peers may make assumptions about her and label her if they were to know about her family situation. Indeed she also

spoke about her peers saying *“weird stuff about people being adopted”* (259-260) and viewing adoption as *“a bad thing”* (274). Violet’s comments were interpreted to indicate a fear of social isolation as a result of being viewed as different with this isolation being particularly distressing due to the centrality of her friendships to her secondary school experience. When later speaking about other individuals knowing about adoption, Violet shared:

“Yeah, not about the people in the class but like for them to actually know what it is and understand what it is” (284-285).

“Cos then if someone is in that class and they are, then the teachers would know not to make a massive deal out of it, whatever they do” (302-303).

It is evident from Violet’s comments that she does not want to be identified as adopted, perhaps through fear of being seen as different to others.

4.2.2.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Friends as a Protective Factor.

It was evident from Violet’s interview that her friendships were her main source of support and therefore central to her secondary school experience.

“Yeah they let me be in the same form as one of my best friends from primary and um, so that was really helpful because weren’t in all in the same classes but it was helpful just knowing that there was someone you could go to if like you were finding it really hard” (133-136).

Indeed when speaking about the challenges she had faced at secondary school, Violet continuously spoke about the role of friendships.

“One of my friends actually had a huge go at the person who said that ‘cos like on that day I was like really upset and like she just had a massive go at them. It was nice to know that someone was there to stick up for you” (407-409).

Violet’s comments indicate her reliance on her peers for support both on a daily basis as well as when faced with a challenging situation. Indeed she made very little reference to teachers as a source of support, indicating the development of a potential over-reliance on her peers.

4.2.2.3.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Belonging Amongst Peers.

Violet spoke about the sense of belonging provided by her peers at secondary school.

“I don’t really have tricky days at school, ‘cos I like school and some of my friends are like ‘what, you like school!’ I’m like ‘yeah I like school ‘cos if I hadn’t gone to school I wouldn’t have met you guys’ and they’re like oh yeah” (160-162).

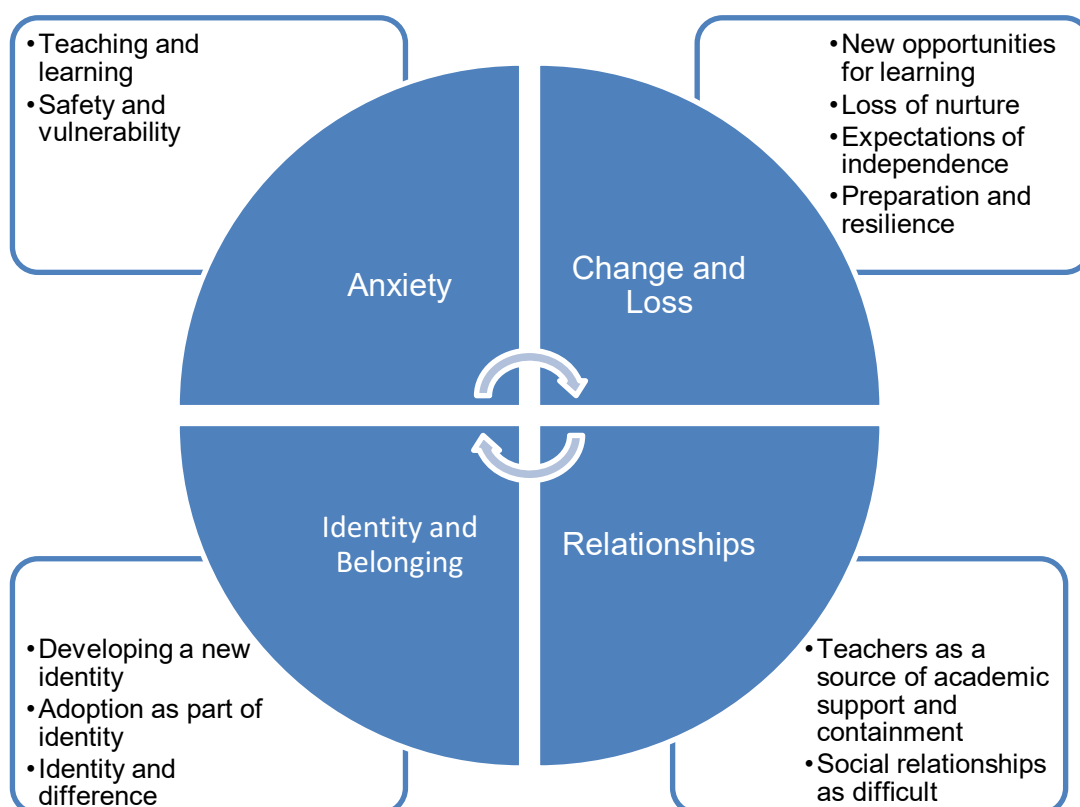
Her comments around school being enjoyable highlight the centrality of these friendships to her school experience. Having these friendships around her appears to give Violet a feeling of being included and thus belonging within her social group. It may be that this social belonging is a need for Violet, rather than just a hope or a wish.

4.2.3 Daniel

Daniel was a male child in Year 7 of a mainstream secondary school. Figure 4.3 provides a summary of the themes from Daniel's interview.

Figure 4.3

Themes from Daniel's Interview



4.2.3.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Anxiety.

The following themes were grouped together as they represented Daniel's concerns around starting secondary school.

4.2.3.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Teaching and Learning.

Daniel spoke about his maths teacher as a source of fear:

“My maths teacher, I won’t mention his name, is quite strict and loud, um, because I know for instance I am afraid to ask him a question because one girl said she couldn’t hear someone and he could and he was further away from the girl, um so he shouted at the girl because he could hear the girl but that other girl couldn’t hear her, so obviously now I’m scared to ask questions but...” (23-27).

Despite not being the child involved in the original incident with the maths teacher, this quote indicates Daniel’s anxiety around the unpredictability and stern nature of secondary school teachers. His difficulties articulating his thoughts, his withdrawn tone and the tailing off of his final sentence indicate his sense of fear around this member of staff. Later during the interview, Daniel spoke about his learning abilities:

“Um, I mean I still do struggle in quite a lot of lessons because obviously from primary I only really just made it out of the umm support thing. I still get a little bit of support but I mostly struggle in lessons still because obviously I missed two years of learning because of adoption and then things like that” (120-123).

By speaking about his primary school experiences, Daniel reflects on his identity as a child who has additional learning needs, thus suggesting a sense of anxiety around how he will continue to manage with the increased academic demands inherent in the secondary school curriculum.

4.2.3.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Safety and Vulnerability.

This theme arose seven times.

“I just knew it would be a lot scarier because there would be a lot more older people” (8-9).

Indeed Daniel went on to speak about people being “*a lot taller*” (52) and “*a lot more moodier*” (67) indicating him to be aware of his size compared to others and thus evoking a sense of anxiety around his vulnerability. When speaking about managing the environment, Daniel mentioned “*gangs blocking the corridors*” (110). His use of the word “*gangs*” indicates these groups of older pupils to be intimidating and menacing, further emphasising his concerns around his safety in school.

4.2.3.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Change and Loss.

The following themes represent Daniel’s understanding of the changes between primary and secondary school and his strategies to manage these changes.

4.2.3.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: New Opportunities for Learning.

When asked how he felt about moving to secondary school, Daniel shared:

*“Obviously I felt quite sad because it was my primary and I had been there a lot longer than *SECONDARY SCHOOL* but um, mostly excited because all of the new lessons I get to have” (3-5).*

His sadness indicates a sense of loss from primary school, potentially of the familiarity and relationships which he had become used to; however, Daniel

also spoke about his excitement for the new learning opportunities he had experienced.

“The first day was Wednesday, um, and I found that day quite fun because I entered on woodwork, um, and I got to have my first experience of maths, Spanish, umm, and some other lessons that I can’t remember” (12-14).

He spoke further about woodwork being the best part of his first day, perhaps as this represents an opportunity which is often not present at primary school.

4.2.3.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Loss of Nurture.

Related to these changes, Daniel’s interview conveyed a sense that he was experiencing a loss of the nurturing and friendly approach inherent in primary school. In speaking about other pupils, Daniel shared:

“In secondary school they only really talk to their friends and don’t really get involved with the children. But as in primary, everyone was really kind and jolly and obviously they still talked to their friends but they liked interacting with other people as well” (82-84).

His use of the word “*children*” is interesting and indicates him to view both himself and other Year 7 pupils as children and the older pupils as not. The comparison to primary school being “*jolly*” perhaps suggests secondary school to feel like a harsher and less nurturing environment. Similarly, Daniel often spoke about teachers being “*strict*” (23), also adding that there is a teacher who is “*just trying to do his job and doesn’t know what we’ve actually been through*

and things like that" (174-176). This sentence indicates Daniel to need a sense of connection from his teachers so that he feels understood and contained. Whilst a comparison to teachers in primary school was not explored, it is likely that these staff provided a more nurturing approach owing to the environments of many primary schools.

4.2.3.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Expectations of Independence.

For Daniel, the loss of primary nurture was accompanied by an increase in the expectations around individual independence.

"Um, we didn't really get a lot of help because obviously now we're in secondary school they expect us to be more independent so we didn't get a lot of help" (231-232).

The hesitation in his voice indicates that he may not have been ready for the increased expectations of independence and instead still required the nurturing approach of primary school. Nonetheless, when previously speaking about staff's awareness of individual pupil needs in secondary school, Daniel had shared that *"once you're out they don't really need to be aware that much really"* (131). This was interpreted by the researcher to indicate a sense of finally being free and independent after leaving primary school, similar to the feeling of being free following imprisonment.

4.2.3.2.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Preparation and Resilience.

When thinking about how he had managed these changes, Daniel spoke about the lack of preparation provided by his primary and secondary schools.

“Um, they didn’t really do a lot because, well you have those transitions but other than that you don’t really do a lot” (206-207).

He later then went on to say how *“one more or two would have helped”* (213-214). Owing to Daniel’s beliefs around the lack of external preparation, his interview offered a sense that he had had to use his individual resilience to manage the changes.

“Um, and I did get lost once or twice but with this certain school in particular it’s a square so you can just keep walking around and you’ll eventually find your way out. Um, but other than that it was kinda the same” (53-55).

Daniel’s confident tone indicates a sense of not feeling overwhelmed by the secondary school experience and thus it being *“kinda the same”* as primary school suggests starting secondary school to almost be a non-event.

4.2.3.3 Superordinate Theme 3: Relationships.

The following themes encapsulated Daniel’s experiences with secondary school relationships.

4.2.3.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Teachers as a Source of Academic Support and Containment.

Daniel spoke about the role of teachers in providing academic support.

“The good things are probably, well in most lessons you get a huge amount of support well you can get if you’re really struggling. Um, and like if you was to miss a lesson the teachers could always help you and catch you up” (113-115).

His use of the word “*huge*” emphasises his feeling of being supported by staff during learning tasks as well as the feeling that there are people there for him if necessary. This sense of staff as containing any school anxieties was also indicated by Daniel’s comments around emotional support.

“You can always go to student support centre because they’ll always help you out and also I know there is a few understanding teachers that will help you, like my English teacher and then my PD teacher always said, because I told her about it and she’s really understanding, um, so she said if you ever need to talk to someone you can always come talk to me” (192-196).

Daniel’s comments indicate his perception of teachers as providing nurture, containment and regulation at times of emotional stress. There is a suggestion that he still requires the nurture which is often provided in a primary school environment, with staff his main source of resilience over peers.

4.2.3.3.2 Subordinate theme 2: Social Relationships as Difficult.

Daniel spoke about his difficulties with peer relationships.

“Um, I found it really hard because I’m really not one of those people that’s the best at making friends so I mainly just hung with one of my friends, and I still do” (90-91).

His hesitation at the beginning of his comment indicates an awareness of his difficulties in making friends with the affirmation that he is still only friends with one peer suggesting a possible wish for more friendships. Indeed Daniel’s difficulties with building social relationships at secondary school were further evidenced through his comparison with primary school:

“In secondary school they only really talk to their friends and don’t really get involved with the children. But as in primary, everyone was really kind and jolly and obviously they still talked to their friends but they liked interacting with other people as well” (82-84).

4.2.3.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Identity and Belonging.

The following themes refer to the developments in Daniel’s identity as a result of starting at secondary school.

4.2.3.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Developing a New Identity.

Secondary school offered Daniel an opportunity to develop a new identity.

“Well on the morning, it was different because my uniform made me feel like a complete different person” (32-33).

This new sense of identity was also captured by his phrase “*now I’m at secondary*” (42) which indicated a sense of pride in being a secondary school student and a feeling of being more grown-up. Indeed Daniel later confidently shared that he had become “*a lead student of year 7*” (234-235) in which he was the “*voice of the people*” (240), indicating his secondary school experience to have offered him a chance to develop a new mature and responsible identity of which he was proud.

4.2.3.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Adoption as Part of Identity.

It was evident from Daniel’s interview that he viewed his adoptive status as a key aspect of his identity; however, he also conveyed a sense that this identity was unrecognised and thus unsupported.

“..he doesn’t know a lot about like our backgrounds and that, but I think if they were to know then they would help you a lot more” (157-158).

Daniel frequently spoke about staff in secondary school not understanding his adoptive background, adding that “*they were definitely a lot more aware in primary*” (132). When asked what would be different if staff were aware, Daniel shared that “*they would all know and know what I’d been through*” (294) and therefore “*could definitely give you a lot more support*” (298). Daniel spoke with a concerned tone when sharing his experiences of not being understood, indicating wider knowledge of his adoption to be almost essential to improving his secondary school experience.

4.2.3.4.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Identity and Difference.

Despite Daniel speaking about a desire for his adopted identity to be shared wider, he also reflected on not wanting to be seen as different to his peers.

“I think that they would know a lot more when you’re struggling and things like that because obviously they would know that you had just got out of special needs and that so, um, so they would know that you still need that extra support just not as much but you can still do a lot on yourself independently but you still need support for some things” (161-165).

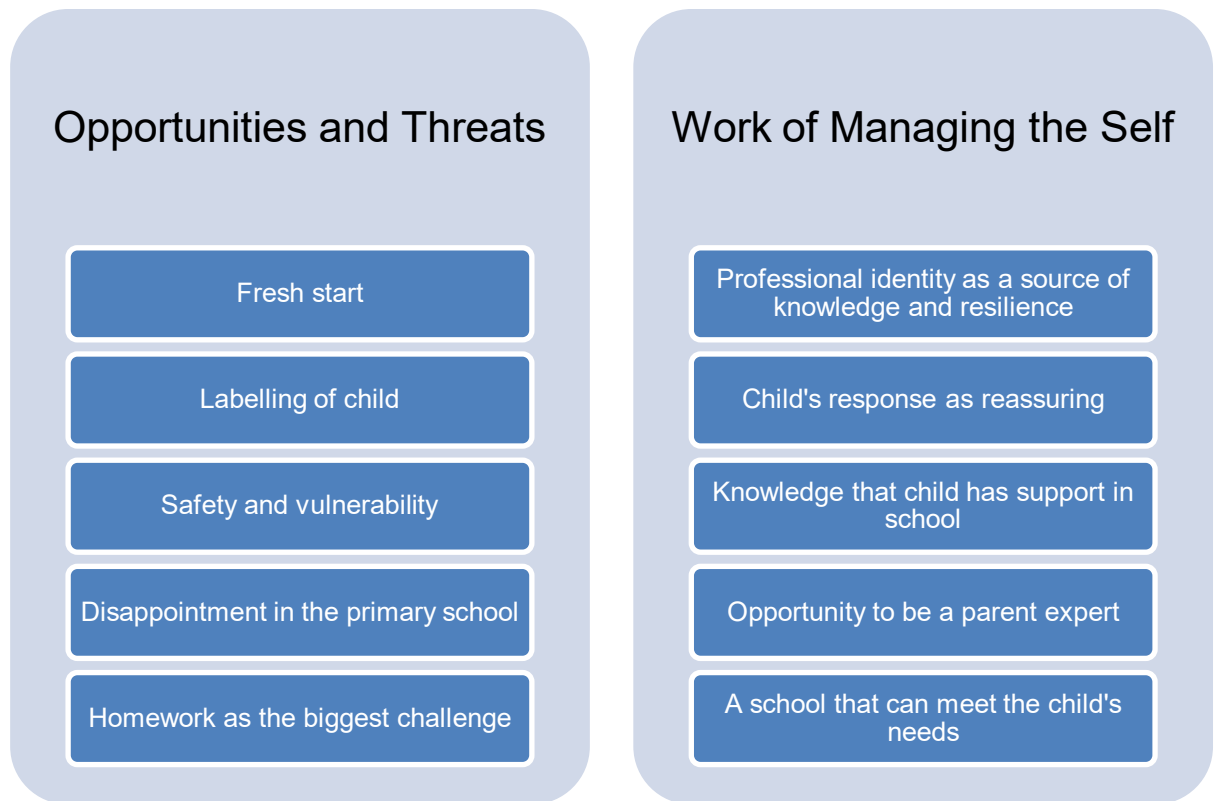
Daniel views himself as a child with special educational needs; however, his reference to being able to also do a lot independently indicates a wish for him to not be treated entirely different to his peers and for attention not to be drawn to his difficulties. Indeed he later speaks about his feeling of embarrassment when a teacher shared his academic difficulties with his class.

4.2.4 Anne

Anne was Emma’s adoptive mother. She had also adopted Emma’s younger sister. Figure 4.4 provides a summary of the themes from Anne’s interview.

Figure 4.4

Themes from Anne's Interview



4.2.4.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Opportunities and Threats.

The following themes were grouped together as they reflected Anne's perceptions of both the opportunities and threats for her daughter (Emma) at secondary school.

4.2.4.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Fresh Start.

It transpired from the interview that Emma's younger sibling had complex SEND and Emma had often had to act as her carer, both at primary school as well as within the birth family. Anne appeared to use a tone of desperation and heartbreak when speaking about Emma's previous inability to be 'Emma' and

thus she hoped that secondary school would offer Emma a fresh start to develop her own identity in a school “*without her sister*” (100). Indeed, Anne often spoke about the new relationships Emma was building at secondary school:

“...she went to her first sleepover last weekend and I think that’s done her the world of good. They seem to be on WhatsApp the whole time this group of girls ‘cos she’s never really had a lot of girl friends, they’ve always been males because, you know, males aren’t bitchy is her quote [laughter] but” (191-195).

Anne’s use of the phrase “*the world of good*” indicates that she views secondary school as providing an opportunity for Emma to be an eleven-year old child again and not viewed as a young carer. In this way, secondary school has served as a fresh start for Anne, offering her daughter a new group of friendships, a new sense of identity and belonging and an opportunity “*to feel happy in her own skin and have a bit more confidence*” (651-652).

4.2.4.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Labelling of Child.

Despite perceiving secondary school to offer a fresh start, Anne also raised concerns about the possibility of her daughter being labelled as a result of her adoptive status.

*“We try not to, we want people to understand that for that not to be a reason why *CHILD’S NAME* isn’t pushed at the same time as she’s a bright little thing. So we haven’t pushed that too much” (203-206).*

This possible fear of Emma being labelled as adopted, treated differently and not allowed to flourish as her individual identity, is further emphasised through Anne's comments about the school's approach to placing all the pupils with pupil premium funding in one form group.

"I do have reservations about all of you know, your kids who come with attached funding being dumped in one area, I'm sure it's not dumped but, it's a concern" (334-336).

Anne's use of the word "*dumped*" offers a perception that her daughter has been thrown down like a bag of rubbish, labelled as a 'needy' child and thus is not understood and supported as an individual. Indeed, Anne also speaks about her daughter being viewed as "*part of the problem form*" (322) and about the form structure representing "*an odd way of socially engineering a population*" (308) perhaps indicating a concern that this labelling will result in a self-fulfilling prophecy emerging (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). It may be that Anne holds concerns around how Emma's individual and social identities will be affected and whether being with other pupil premium children will result in her returning to the caring role she previously held with her sister.

4.2.4.1.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Safety and Vulnerability.

This theme arose on two occasions and reflected concerns around how Emma's perceived attachment needs could result in her increased vulnerability at secondary school.

“She’s quite scared of groups of people and older teenagers she says she’s scared of so walking to school when there’s two schools so close together is quite daunting for her” (58-61).

Whilst Anne spoke about Emma’s fears, her discussion of this issue could indicate her to also have concerns around how her daughter’s needs may increase her vulnerability when in secondary school. Anne also speaks about her daughter as being “very very sensory” (62) with Anne’s reflection on these needs and use of repetition possibly indicating the increased noise of secondary school to be perceived as a threat to her daughter’s successful experience.

4.2.4.1.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Disappointment in the Primary School.

When asked about the preparation provided for her daughter, Anne spoke about her disappointment in the primary school.

*“They made a call to *SECONDARY SCHOOL* and suggested she’d benefit from an extra transition day, which was nice but not really enough. I think they got to the end of the SATs and were like right we’re almost done now, if I’m being honest. They did really well with her with the SATs and they helped her catch up a lot but, mmm not really” (695-699).*

Anne’s perception of the lack of understanding within the primary school of Emma’s needs is indicated through her choice of language and the confirmation offered at the end of her final sentence. Indeed she later speaks about how the primary school did not understand “*the emotional side that she needed*” (722)

and were not “*clued up on attachment at all*” (731). For Anne, this lack of understanding offered a source of concern and threat to her child experiencing a successful start to secondary school and is in contrast to the nurturing and inclusive ethos of the secondary school which serves to manage parental anxiety (section 4.2.4.2.5).

4.2.4.1.5 Subordinate Theme 5: Homework as the Biggest Challenge.

Anne spoke about the difficulties with homework:

“Yeah I think, upping the level of homework has been our biggest challenge, and getting her to engage with that [laughter]” (343-344). “Um, and that that I think has been our biggest challenge because home is home in her eyes, it’s not school and her view is that, if they haven’t taught me enough in school then you know they haven’t taught me well enough, it’s very black and white” (349-352).

Anne uses laughter in an attempt to lighten the extent of the challenge and this may indicate her to feel a sense of despair when attempting to support Emma to complete the increased level of homework at secondary school. The separation of home and school for the child is at the heart of this despair with Anne’s comments indicating an inability to alter Emma’s view.

4.2.4.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Work of Managing the Self.

The following themes represented the different sources of reassurance for Anne in managing her anxieties around her daughter starting secondary school.

4.2.4.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Professional Identity as a Source of Knowledge and Resilience.

Anne was a secondary school teacher herself and spoke about how this role had informed her understanding of her daughter's transition.

"I was quite relieved to be honest, 'cos primary school, you know it was a very nice school and very good academically, um, but I, I felt I knew as a secondary school teacher myself what the processes were there" (78-80).

Anne's reference to her own role indicates her knowledge about secondary school processes to offer her some reassurance and familiarity, thus serving as a mechanism to reduce any anxiety about the transition experience. She also speaks about her role in preparing Emma for secondary school by trying *"to get her to come into my school so she go to see it a little bit more"* (72). Such strategies may have supported Anne to manage her own anxieties as well as fulfil a feeling of responsibility to prepare and guide her daughter through the experience successfully.

4.2.4.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Child's Response as Reassuring.

Anne spoke twice about Emma's response to starting secondary school.

“She was really worried but I think all kids were, she dealt with it I think a lot better than a lot of other kids who haven’t had her experience you know” (41-42).

Anne appears surprised at how Emma had managed the move, suggesting that she may have used her daughter’s resilience to manage her own anxieties.

*“The system isn’t meant for our kids and *CHILD’S NAME* I think can, she’ll be fine and the system will get her through that” (498-499).*

Emma’s resilience and individual personality offer a source of comfort for Anne in what otherwise she appears to view as a challenging system which does not acknowledge and support the needs of previously-looked after children.

4.2.4.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Knowledge that Child has Support in School.

Anne spoke about the connection she had with a member of secondary school staff which had pre-dated the transition.

“We all rely quite heavily on our friend who teaches at the school really as that was her safe place in her classroom and she’ll dip in and out as it suits her which is nice. We’re very lucky in that respect” (73-75).

This source of familiarity appears to reassure Anne that her daughter will be supported at school and have someone to go to at times of stress, thus enabling her to continue with her daily life free from continuous worry about her daughter. Indeed she repeats this sense of feeling “*lucky*” later in the interview,

further emphasising Anne's reliance on this school connection to offer her a sense of security and emotional containment.

4.2.4.2.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Opportunity to be a Parent Expert.

Anne spoke about the response she had received when sharing information and communicating with the secondary school on nine occasions.

“Um, they gave us some time and we weren't treated like fussy parents which can so often be the case 'cos I think people think that 'oh they're adopted now so, you know, all they need is a bit of love and that fixes everything' if only, um but they gave us time and listened and we were kinda treated like we were the experts in our child which is a rarity, yeah, 'cos somebody has been on a course or they've read a book so they must know; or they present this way in front of them so that's how they must be, so that was quite nice” (32-38).

Anne's comments indicate a sense of feeling valued as a parental expert in her daughter, as well as a sense of relief that she has not had to fight for her daughter to receive support. Indeed she also speaks about how she did not feel as if she was *“being a pest”* (81) by contacting the school as well as the support offered as a result of her communication, stating *“it's like little things that make a difference”* (89). Anne shared:

“Yeah, I've got absolute confidence in the school which makes things easier 'cos that's a big thing I think” (295-296).

Anne's phrase "*absolute confidence*" indicates her to feel listened to by the school and viewed as an important partner in Emma's education. Her comment "*that's a big thing I think*" suggests her to have previously had to battle with schools in order to ensure she feels heard and support is provided for her daughter, further emphasised through the comment "*I didn't want it to come across that you know, that I was having a pop at the teachers or anything*" (212-214). This apparent new-found faith in the secondary school offers a sense of relief which helps to calm any parental anxiety around the experience.

4.2.4.2.5 Subordinate Theme 5: A School that can Meet the Child's Needs.

This theme arose five times.

*"We really liked *SECONDARY SCHOOL* because it had a nice family feel and we didn't go there and have some of the spiel you get from some of the other schools about we are a disciplined environment, we're this, we're that, 'cos we know that we're gonna need somewhere with flexibility and understanding" (6-10).*

For Anne, a "*smaller*" (273) secondary school which had a nurturing and inclusive ethos was essential; perhaps as such an approach was deemed to be the best at supporting the child's perceived attachment needs which Anne appears evidently aware of. She also speaks about the opportunities provided for her daughter:

"I can't speak highly enough of the school to be honest, yeah, they've been really really good and they've tried to get her involved with things and they've looked after her when she's needed to" (185-187).

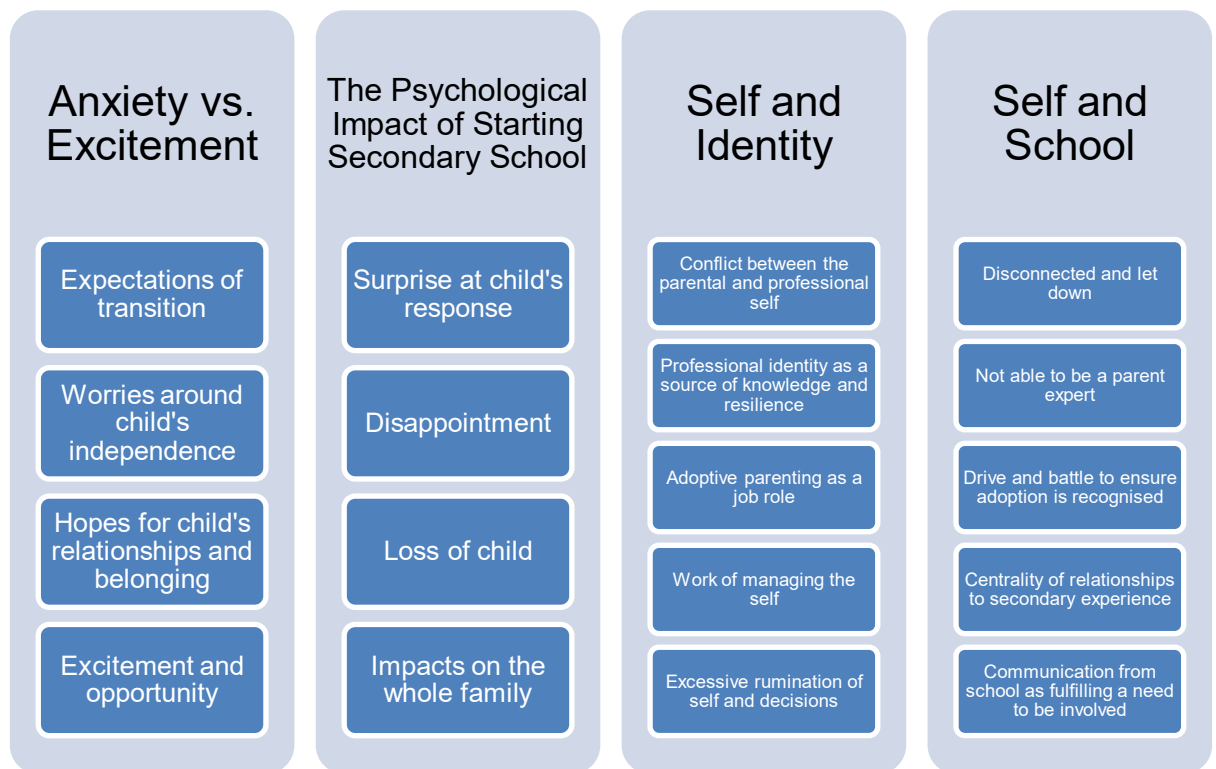
Anne's positive and upbeat tone along with her repetition of "*really*" further emphasise her feelings towards the support provided by the secondary school in helping Emma to settle. Indeed, she also states that "*it felt like they cared*" (17). For Anne, this school ethos has perhaps provided her with a sense of reassurance that her daughter will have a positive experience and thus her individual needs will be supported.

4.2.5 Jessica

Jessica was Violet's adoptive mother. Figure 4.5 provides a summary of the themes from Jessica's interview.

Figure 4.5

Themes from Jessica's Interview



4.2.5.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Anxiety vs. Excitement.

The following themes were grouped together as they represented Jessica's feelings prior to her daughter (Violet) starting secondary school.

4.2.5.1.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Expectations of Transition.

Jessica spoke about her expectations around the transition experience:

"I was going to say it's gone better than I anticipated but actually I think it has gone probably as I was expecting and the reason I say that is because I know transition is really difficult um for children who are adopted" (3-6).

Jessica's anticipations indicate her to have held a construct of secondary school and transition for adopted children which was based on her previous experience and knowledge. Indeed her later comments "*she wasn't as, probably wasn't as nervous as I was*" (110) and "*I thought she might um, lag behind a bit more*" (204-205) suggest her to have used this construction to predict Violet's response as opposed to considering her daughter's own individual personality.

4.2.5.1.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Worries around Child's Independence.

This theme arose on three occasions.

"I was worried about her getting the bus but, actually some of the things around school I was more worried about than school itself. You know, so it's quite a big independence thing to get the bus back on your own and it's quite rough, it's quite rough, it's just rough" (125-128).

Jessica's repetition of the word "*rough*" suggests her to have held significant anxieties around how Violet would manage the increased independence expectations, with this consideration of the local area perhaps serving as one mechanism to justify her concerns to herself. She also speaks about her expectation that Violet would "*lose everything*" (39) as well as "*panic about finding her way around the building*" (42), further emphasising her anxieties and perhaps indicating a difficulty allowing her daughter to grow-up.

4.2.5.1.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Hopes for Child's Relationships and Belonging.

Anxiety around Violet's social belonging was raised by Jessica on seven occasions.

"My anxiety was about her starting, I just wanted her to get some friends and not be billy no mates on her own in the canteen you know" (452-454).

Jessica's repeated reference to friendships suggests her to perceive social belonging as essential to a successful secondary experience; however, it is likely that she is aware of the social difficulties many adopted children face, therefore making the need for social belonging even more pertinent for Jessica. Indeed she later speaks about Violet's text message interactions with her friends, citing this as a source of anxiety and unknown with the lack of responses from friends being explained by her daughter being "*a bit needy and overwhelming*" (252). Jessica's awareness of her daughter's social difficulties, combined with her construct of secondary school as a more social environment, provides both a source of anxiety and a source of hope for new relationships.

4.2.5.1.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Excitement and Opportunity.

This theme was in contrast to Jessica's anxieties, indicating a sense of ambivalence to the experience of her daughter starting secondary school.

"I wanted her to leave primary, I was ready for her to go to secondary in some ways as well just 'cos some, the relationships there you know, have carried on! But um, yeah I was, when we went to get her uniform I

was really excited for her, that was a really, that was really lovely!” (164-168).

The repetition of “*really*” indicates the experience of purchasing the uniform to offer Jessica a sense of new opportunities for her daughter. Indeed she later speaks about the uniform as a “*rite of passage*” (175-176), further emphasising Violet’s new identity and the excitement at her growing-up.

4.2.5.2 Superordinate Theme 2: The Psychological Impact of Starting Secondary School.

The following themes represented the emotions which followed Violet starting secondary school.

4.2.5.2.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Surprise at Child’s Response.

As a result of Jessica’s expectations around how Violet would manage the transition, she conveyed a sense of surprise at her daughter’s response.

“You know she’s actually coped. She’s made me realised she’s probably coped better than I thought she would” (179-181).

The use of the word “*actually*” conveys this surprise both at how her daughter coped with the experience as well as how it was not the big event she had expected it to be. Violet’s response to starting secondary school and her individual resilience when faced with what could be stressful incidents, such as a “*stabbing*” (477) on the school site, appear to provide Jessica with a sense of reassurance which helps to manage her own anxieties.

4.2.5.2.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Disappointment.

In addition to a feeling of surprise, Jessica also conveyed a sense of disappointment towards the experience of Violet starting secondary school.

“She came home, it was such a non-event, I don’t remember it, she didn’t cry, she didn’t seem, she just said ‘it was alright’ you know and that was it really” (106-108).

Jessica’s use of the phrase “*non-event*” indicates her to have expected it to be a big and perhaps dramatic event in which she may have been needed to support her child. Nonetheless, Violet’s response and almost lack of significant experience appears to have resulted in a sense of disappointment for Jessica.

4.2.5.2.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Loss of Child.

This theme represented a sense of loss for Jessica as a result of her daughter growing-up and moving to secondary school.

“It’s really painful, it’s quite painful as parents because we’ve only got one. We were one and done! So your, if you’ve only got one child and I’m sure it’s the same if you’ve got other children as well, but if you have only got one, you’re...is this the right way round...your first is always your last. So the first time she goes to secondary school is always going to be the last time any of my children, because I’ve only got one, will do that. So it was bitter sweet” (155-160).

The use of the word “*painful*” suggests Jessica to feel a sense of emotional hurt from the experience, perhaps owing to the change in the relationship she will now have with her daughter. Jessica’s comments convey a sense of emptiness and sadness that the experience is over with very little to now look forward to.

4.2.5.2.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Impacts on the Whole Family.

The impacts of secondary school on the whole family arose six times.

“Because with homework, which is why I said I’d park that and come back to it, she’s had head banging and everything and it’s been really intense. I know no kids like homework but it is and then some, you know, it’s just off the scale sometimes” (212-215).

The phrase “*park that*” indicates homework to be a significant issue for Jessica and therefore one which requires its own dedicated place in the interview owing to the overwhelming and almost scary impact it is having. Indeed she shares that homework “*dominates our entire weekend*” (224), and speaks about her experience as “*off-road parenting*” (631) in which there is “*no quite defined map*” (660-661), further emphasising the holistic familial impacts of supporting an adopted child through secondary school.

4.2.5.3 Superordinate Theme 3: Self and Identity.

These themes referred to Jessica’s views on her identity as an adoptive parent and the use of this identity to manage her anxieties around Violet starting secondary school.

4.2.5.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Conflict Between the Parental and Professional Self.

Jessica worked as an EP with a specialism in looked-after and previously looked-after children with this professional identity interfering with her parental identity.

*“I find it really really challenging that I, wearing my professional hat in *LOCAL AUTHORITY*, have quite a lot of influence, whereas over in this authority, and I, I don’t want to go in and say ‘oh I know this from work’ ‘cos who wants to do that, you look like a twonk, no one wants to do that. It’s a real power play and I don’t want that relationship. I have been forced to do that and I haven’t liked doing it so when we had that meeting, um, when they said ‘oh you know, no I don’t think we do that money here’ and I said ‘look I know from work you do’ and I had to be quite firm about it and I don’t ever do that and I don’t really appreciate having to be pushed into that role” (587-595).*

Whilst Jessica appears to want to just be a parent, her comments indicate a difficulty in separating out her parental and professional identities, with this conflict driven by her perception of a lack of awareness of adoption amongst school staff. This inability to only be a parent is further emphasised through the following comment:

“The SENCo, who’d once said to me ‘you’re an EP, you should know what the matter is with your child’. That’s never left me, that’s really

bruised me a bit actually 'cos she's my child, she's not my case study"
(596-598).

She appears unable to separate out and thus forced to take-up her professional identity, stating *"if I didn't do what I did, I wouldn't be doing that; I'd just be a normal parent, if that makes sense!"* (238-239).

4.2.5.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Professional Identity as a Source of Knowledge and Resilience.

Despite this identity conflict, Jessica's professional identity also appears to offer her both knowledge and resilience when faced with challenging situations and a perceived lack of recognition of adoption by the secondary school.

"It's exhausting, it is really tiring and I feel tired quite a lot. Um, I was saying to my husband actually yesterday that I think if we didn't do the jobs we did and we didn't know some of the stuff we know, I'm sure, I know people that have separated from partners where that's you know, been the case" (232-235).

Indeed, Jessica further emphasises her professional identity as a protective factor when speaking about homework, saying *"you know being a psychologist, I have got some skills up my sleeve"* (225). Nonetheless, whilst her professional identity provides knowledge and resilience, it also appears to offer a feeling of desperation that she should know what to do when faced with a challenge, using this knowledge to hypothesise what is happening for her daughter, for example, *"I'd wondered whether she's mildly a girl on the spectrum"* (209-210).

4.2.5.3.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Adoptive Parenting as a Job Role.

Jessica spoke ten times about the role of an adoptive parent.

"I think it's the fact that adoptive parents are often on their knees anyway, don't need this extra layer of grief, it's not our job, it isn't our job. It's the school's job to know all this stuff and when they don't, you end up feeling like a pushy parent, you end up feeling more of a nuisance than a friendly nuisance and that's not a headspace I am comfortable in" (601-605).

The repetition of *"it's not our job"* indicates the stress Jessica is experiencing as a result of the lack of recognition of adoption by the secondary school. Stating that she has *"micromanaged so much"* (236) for her daughter and as if she has to *"constantly...be a bit 'eh eh eh' for them [school] to actually do anything"* (425-426) further emphasises the increased responsibility she feels and the role of an adoptive parent as more like a job, than perhaps would be true for parenting a birth child.

4.2.5.3.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Work of Managing the Self.

As a result of Jessica's anxiety around the start of secondary school, she employed a range of techniques to manage these emotions.

"I had asked for this girl that she knew at primary to be in the same form group when we'd had this one meeting with the school beforehand and

um so that was, I just felt that if she had someone to walk through the doors with it would be ok” (122-124).

Whilst Jessica may have felt that she was employing these strategies to support her daughter, her comments also indicate a need to act in this way to manage her own anxieties and provide her with a feeling that she has done all she can to support the transition.

4.2.5.3.5 Subordinate Theme 5: Excessive Rumination of Self and Decisions.

Jessica spent time considering her identity and her decisions relating to the secondary school experience.

“Believe you me I spent a lot of time thinking is it me, I have spent a lot of time navel gazing, thinking do I wind people up, have I got this wrong” (623-624).

The use of the phrase “*navel gazing*” indicates deep and almost self-centred contemplation about who she is, what she thinks and the impact she has on others without acknowledgement of the wider context, including Violet’s own response to secondary school. Indeed, she later acknowledges there to be “*some neuroticism*” (650), further suggesting her to be questioning her own decisions around her daughter and a sense of internal conflict around this.

4.2.5.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Self and School.

Whilst the following themes are related to superordinate theme 3, they were grouped separately as they were deemed to explore the relationship between Jessica and the secondary school more directly.

4.2.5.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Disconnected and Let Down.

Jessica spoke about her feeling of being disconnected from the secondary school.

“I couldn’t tell you because for example we’ve not had a parent’s evening yet, we’ve not even had a meet the tutors night like I know some of my friends who have got children in other schools have, so I couldn’t even say it’s been a particular teacher or, I really don’t know” (61-64).

The phrase “*even had*” emphasises Jessica’s feelings of isolation and exclusion with the comparison to other local schools indicating a sense of feeling let down by the approach of the school she has chosen for her daughter. Indeed her comment “*I would have felt heartened and gladdened*” (403) when speaking about the potential impacts of more contact further highlight this lack of confidence in the secondary school to recognise and support Violet’s needs.

4.2.5.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Not Able to be a Parent Expert.

This theme arose on five occasions.

“The SENCo at 25 minutes while I was still talking, I was in the middle of talking, the, the progress leader had asked me a question, she just got

up [laughing] and went to leave. So I said, 'oh, right, right ok we're obviously done'" (415-417).

Jessica's use of humour suggests an attempt to make light of a situation in which she appears to have felt devalued as a parent expert. Indeed her comments that the school "*should have been in touch*" (386) and "*reached out a bit more given that she's [daughter] a disadvantaged group*" further emphasise Jessica's inability to offer her parental expertise about her daughter.

4.2.5.4.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Drive and Battle to Ensure Adoption is Recognised.

Owing to Jessica's perception that the secondary school does not recognise the possible needs of an adopted child, she conveys a sense of having to fight to get this point across.

"I just find it really difficult because they don't get it, so you're banging on a very firmly locked door" (295-296).

Jessica appears to feel frustration and desperation at ensuring the secondary school become more aware of adoption. Indeed she later uses the phrase "*I would do a lot of the driving, I had to put the flea in someone's ear*" (374-375) emphasising her perception of the need to be forceful in order for Violet to receive support. Jessica also speaks about her decision to describe her daughter as previously looked-after instead of adopted, in order to "*make the flags go up*" (675). Having to use such strategies suggests a feeling of despair in which adoption begins to define the child.

4.2.5.4.4 Subordinate Theme 4: Centrality of Relationships to Secondary Experience.

It was evident from Jessica's interview that her relationship with the school SENDCo was central to her experience. Jessica shared the negative aspects of this relationship:

"I just, I've got to own it, I don't like the woman, I think she's a very dangerous SENDCo, I think she's in the wrong job, I think she's very aggressive with people who are potentially quite vulnerable as parents. Um, there's a lot of power and control issues which I've never had with anyone else that's ever been involved with my child" (311-315).

However, she also shared the importance of this relationship in managing her feelings towards secondary school:

"Yeah, it sounds so ironic, but I think having the same SENDCo, at least I haven't had to try and build a relationship, I haven't had to think 'is this going to happen again, oh no it has' because it is just a continuation of the same relationship" (487-489).

Whilst there appears to be an element of conflict and ambivalence in Jessica's feelings towards the SENDCo, her repeated reference to this individual indicates the centrality of this relationship to Jessica's experience. It is this relationship which enables Jessica to feel like a partner in Violet's education.

4.2.5.4.5 Subordinate Theme 5: Communication from School as Fulfilling a Need to be Involved.

The communication Jessica received from the school more generally appeared important to her.

*“Um, I know it sounds daft ‘cos it’s nothing to do with *CHILD’S NAME* at all but little things, I mean I suppose, maybe it is interesting for your research, they tweet quite a lot and all the departments tweet so that’s quite nice, it gives you and they always seem really proud of the kids, you know and I know it’s all social media, so it’s all bullshit probably but you know, there is, they don’t have to do that, the primary never did” (517-522).*

The school’s use of Twitter was mentioned several times during the interview which appeared to surprise Jessica when questioned more directly on it. This communication appears to offer Jessica a sense of inclusion in the school community as well as meeting a need to be involved in Violet’s education, something which often deteriorates as children move into secondary school and school contact becomes more infrequent. Her use of the words “*daft*” and “*bullshit*” almost indicate a sense of embarrassment on realising her thoughts on the school’s use of Twitter.

4.3 Findings Across Participants

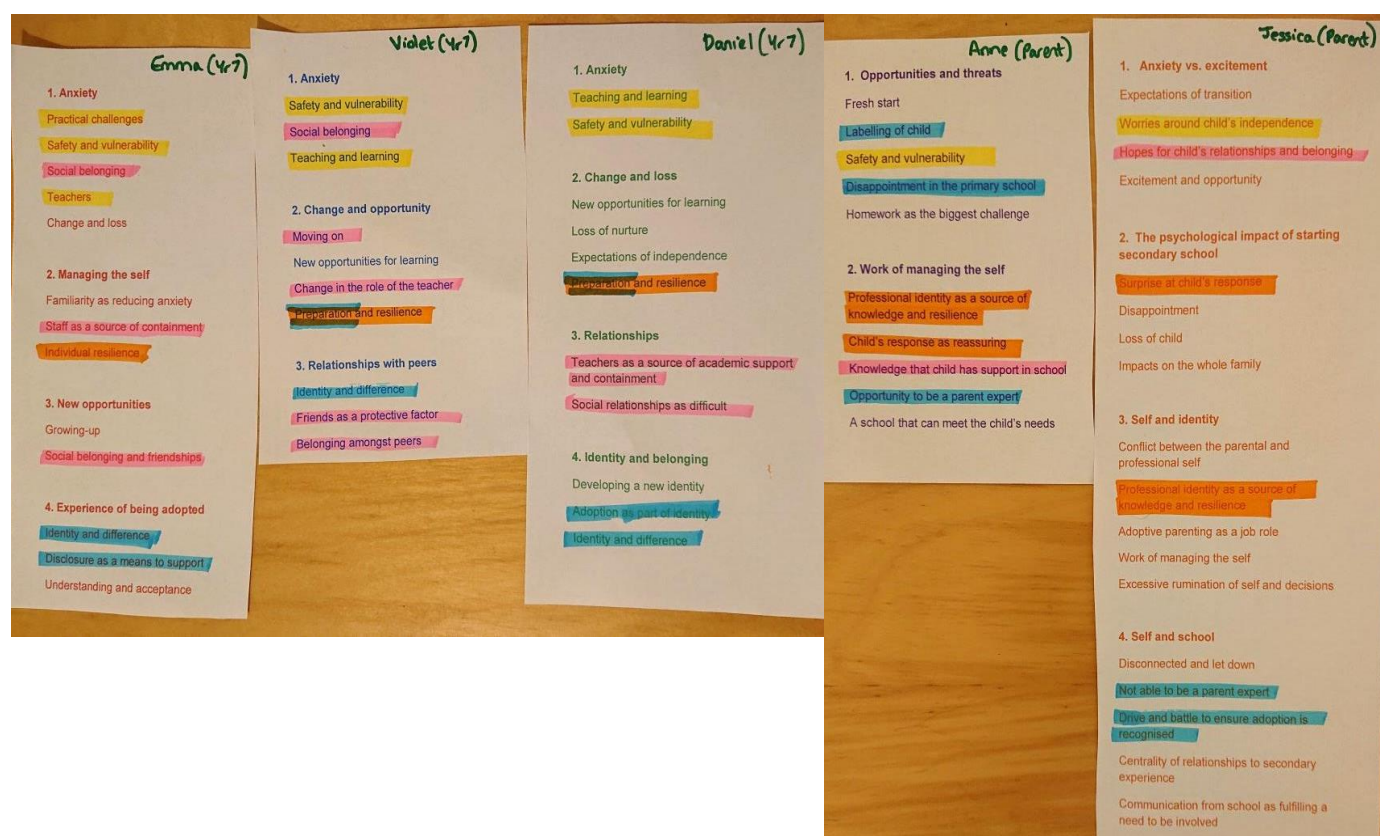
As discussed in Chapter 3, the final stage of the analysis involved looking for patterns in the superordinate and subordinate themes across participants.

Themes for each participant were placed adjacent to one another in order to

explore connections with the result being a process of reconfiguration and relabelling. This process resulted in four generic themes – Anxiety (Yellow), Managing the Self (Orange), Attachment (Pink), Adoptive Identity (Blue) (see Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6

Cross-Case Analysis of Superordinate Themes



During this process of comparison, some participants represented unique idiosyncrasies, such as Jessica's subtheme of 'Excessive rumination of self and decisions'; however, higher-order qualities which were shared between participants were also identified, superseding other themes. For example, whilst

all participants spoke in some capacity about their or their child's relationships with peers and teachers, the 'wide lens' perspective of this final stage of the analysis, eventually led to themes around relationships being succeeded by 'Attachment', as these interpretations resulted in greater meaning for the researcher.

Table 4.1 presents the result of this stage of the analysis, including how themes are nested within superordinate themes with examples provided for each participant. For validity, reported themes occurred across three or more participants (i.e. at least 50% of the sample) or alternatively were present in both parent interviews. Table 4.1 is elaborated upon in Chapter 5 where these themes are also discussed in relation to the research question.

Table 4.1

Master Table of Group Themes

Group themes	Phenomenological evidence	Transcript line numbers
1. Anxiety		
School environment	Emma: "There wasn't at the start though, I didn't know where anything was. I only knew where to get break and lunch that's it, I didn't know where any of my lessons were".	85-87

Teaching and learning	Violet: “You get pushed a lot, in the corridors. Like physically pushed, because of all like the big Year 11s and stuff, they’re like towering over you like ‘aahh’”.	23-24
	Daniel: “I just knew it would be a lot scarier because there would be a lot more older people”.	8-9
	Anne: “She’s quite scared of groups of people and older teenagers she says she’s scared of so walking to school when there’s two schools so close together is quite daunting for her”.	58-61
	Jessica: “I was worried about her getting the bus but, actually some of the things around school I was more worried about than school itself. You know, so it’s quite a big independence thing to get the bus back on your own and it’s quite rough, it’s quite rough, it’s just rough”.	125-128
	Emma: “You think it’s gonna be like a horror movie or something but it’s actually not, it’s actually really nice ‘cos people are really nice to you when you	298-300

Change, loss and opportunity	start, like they don't just scream at you".	
	Violet: "Teachers being less shouty. They shout at the whole class".	380
	Daniel: "My maths teacher, I won't mention his name, is is quite strict and loud, um, because I know for instance I am afraid to ask him a question".	23-24
	Anne: "Upping the level of homework has been our biggest challenge, and getting her to engage with that".	343-344
	Jessica: "With homework, which is why I said I'd park that and come back to it, she's had head banging and everything and it's been really intense".	212-214
	Emma: "It's, it's a bit sad because it like you're always like, in primary school you're always used to being at the top, and then you go all the way back to the bottom".	409-411
	Violet: "You don't want to leave your friends when you go, so like on your last day it's very sad 'cos you all like crying".	3-4
	Daniel: "I felt quite sad because it was my primary and I had been there a lot	3-4

	<p>longer”.</p> <p>Anne: “I wanted *CHILD’S NAME* to be in a school without her sister”.</p> <p>Jessica: “It’s really painful, it’s quite painful as parents because we’ve only got one”.</p>	<p>100</p> <p>155</p>
<p>2. Managing the self</p> <p>Individual resilience</p>	<p>Emma: “They can’t tell me where everything is, I’ve got to learn myself. Like they can give me a tour and show me where everything is but after that I have to learn myself otherwise I will never know”.</p> <p>Violet: “It was nerve-wracking but like you get used to it, yeah, it’s quite easy to get used to ‘cos like you do it every day so yeah”.</p> <p>Daniel: “Um, and I did get lost once or twice but with this certain school in particular it’s a square so you can just keep walking around and you’ll eventually find your way out. Um, but</p>	<p>193-195</p> <p>107-108</p> <p>53-55</p>

Reassurance from child's response	other than that it was kinda the same".	
	Anne: "I was quite relieved to be honest, 'cos primary school, you know it was a very nice school and very good academically, um, but I, I felt I knew as a secondary school teacher myself what the processes were there".	78-80
	Jessica: "I think if we didn't do the jobs we did and we didn't know some of the stuff we know, I'm sure, I know people that have separated from partners where that's you know, been the case".	233-235
	Anne: "She was really worried but I think all kids were, she dealt with it I think a lot better than a lot of other kids who haven't had her experience you know".	41-42
	Jessica: "I mean she could have become a school refuser over the stabbing, you know but she, she hasn't and she's just managed it and it's not really any of her business and she's not bothered so that makes me in turn feel more reassured I think".	476-479

3. Attachment		
Hopes and worries for peer relationships	Emma: “I’m scared that like people will just say no, like I asked someone if they could be my friend in primary school and they just said ‘no’, like so rude, they wouldn’t like it if I said it to them”.	144-146
	Violet: “You go on to it being a bit oooh where do I fit in”.	385
	Anne: “I think her friendships have really secured up a little bit”.	288
	Jessica: “My anxiety was about her starting, I just wanted her to get some friends and not be billy no mates on her own in the canteen you know”.	452-454
Belonging amongst peers	Emma: “Like I’m friends with like loads of girls now but in primary school I was friends with loads of boys”.	150-151
	Violet: “Not really I don’t really have tricky days at school, ‘cos I like school and some of my friends are like ‘what, you like school!’ I’m like ‘yeah I like school ‘cos if I hadn’t gone to school I wouldn’t have met you guys’ and they’re	160-162

Role of school staff	<p>like oh yeah”</p> <p>Daniel: “Um, I found it really hard because I’m really not one of those people that’s the best at making friends so I mainly just hung with one of my friends, and I still do”.</p>	90-91
	<p>Emma: “She knows when I’m feeling sad ‘cos she knows me so like when I’m feeling sad, I just talk to her outside and then I tell her what’s wrong and then she tries to help”.</p>	42-45
	<p>Violet: “So, if someone was being horrible to you, like bullying you and stuff like that, they’d tell you to like stay away from them, not talk to them, not engage with them, like if they’re being nasty just walk away from it and just blank it out. And stuff like that”.</p>	148-151
	<p>Daniel: “I know there is a few understanding teachers that will help you, like my English teacher and then my PD teacher always said, because I told her about it and she’s really understanding, um, so she said if you</p>	193-196

	<p>ever need to talk to someone you can always come talk to me”.</p> <p>Anne: “We all rely quite heavily on our friend who teaches at the school really as that was her safe place in her classroom and she’ll dip in and out as it suits her which is nice”.</p>	73-75
<p>4. Adoptive identity</p> <p>Identity and difference</p>	<p>Emma: “I’m happy with the people that know because like if they like if everyone knew, like, they would just be paying attention to me instead of helping people who actually need help”.</p> <p>Violet: “Yeah, not about the people in the class but like for them to actually know what it is and understand what it is”.</p> <p>Daniel: “they would know that you still need that extra support just not as much but you can still do a lot on yourself independently but you still need support for some things”.</p> <p>Anne: “I do have reservations about all</p>	<p>465-467</p> <p>284-285</p> <p>163-165</p> <p>334-336</p>

Disclosure and personal experiential knowledge as essential to child receiving support	of you know, your kids who come with attached funding being dumped in one area, I'm sure it's not dumped but, it's a concern".	
	Jessica: "You don't want them labelled".	408
	Emma: "If you didn't know someone was adopted and then they told you you were adopted, like, they could like help you, like you could have like support and everything".	36-38
	Daniel: "I think if they were to know then they would help you a lot more".	157-158
	Anne: "Um, they gave us some time and we weren't treated like fussy parents which can so often be the case 'cos I think people think that 'oh they're adopted now so, you know, all they need is a bit of love and that fixes everything' if only, um but they gave us time and listened and we were kinda treated like we were the experts in our child which is a rarity".	32-36
	Jessica: "I would do a lot of the driving, I had to put the flea in someone's ear".	374-375

Lack of external support for transition	<p>Violet: “I can’t remember I think they did because our year manager came into our school and had a chat with us about like all the stuff that happens at *SECONDARY SCHOOL* like the school rules and stuff”.</p>	120-122
	<p>Daniel: “Um, they didn’t really do a lot because, well you have those transitions but other than that you don’t really do a lot”.</p>	206-207
	<p>Anne: “They made a call to *SECONDARY SCHOOL* and suggested she’d benefit from an extra transition day, which was nice but not really enough”.</p>	695-696
	<p>Jessica: “Excuse me while I spit my coffee everywhere! Um, nothing, until we asked for a meeting”.</p>	260-261

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the themes arising for each participant’s unique experience of either themselves or their child starting secondary school as well as the themes common across participants. The next chapter will discuss the

meaning of these findings in relation to the research question. Limitations and ethical issues of the current research will also be discussed and implications for the practice of EPs and future research proposed.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter presented the findings from the process of IPA. This chapter aims to discuss these findings in relation to the research question with links made to the psychological theory underpinning the study as well as the existing literature. The chapter then provides a critical review of the research before describing the plan for disseminating the findings to the research consultants, participants and wider stakeholders. Implications for supporting adopted young people through the start of secondary school will be explored including the implications for the practice of EPs. This chapter also provides areas for further research before discussing the reflections and reflexivity of the researcher. Lastly, overall conclusions will be offered in which the findings are combined with the issues outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 in order to highlight the key messages from the research.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The aim of this research was to explore the lived experiences of starting secondary school for adoptive families. Following a review of the existing literature, the following research question was proposed:

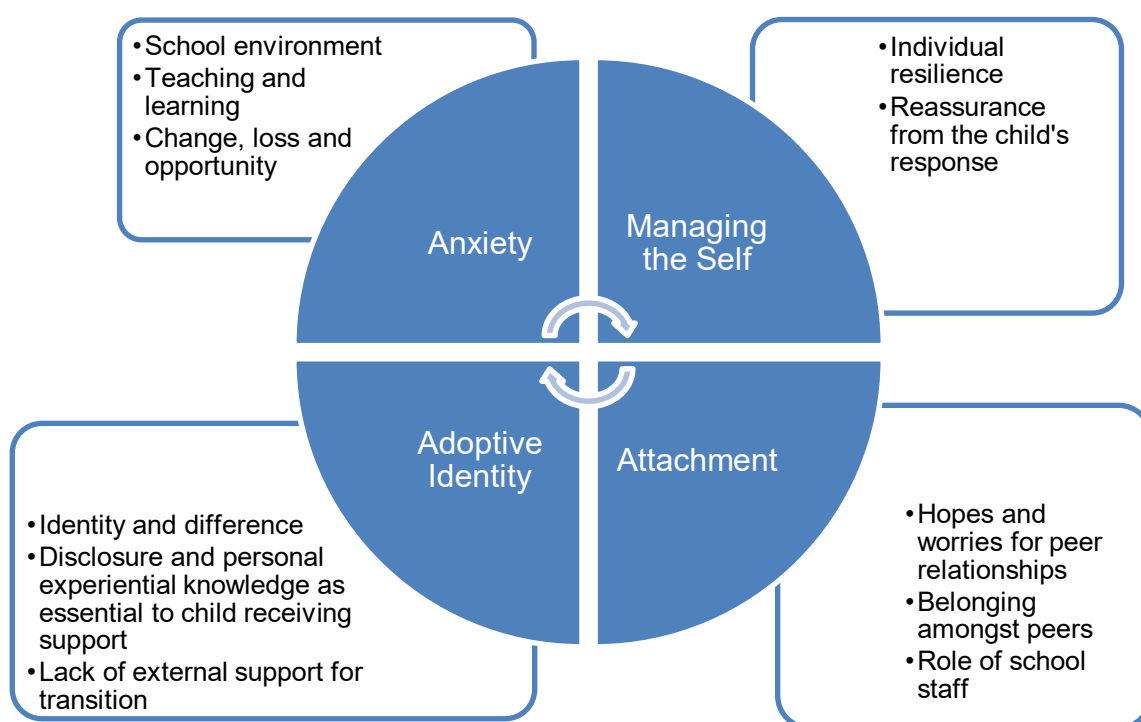
What are the experiences of adopted young people and their adoptive parents when starting secondary school?

This section will discuss the main findings in relation to the research question and in the context of previous research and psychological theory using

information from both the idiographic and the group level analyses. Figure 5.1 provides a summary of the key findings derived from the across case analysis.

Figure 5.1

Summary of Themes Derived from the Across-Case Analysis



5.2.1 Anxiety

The research revealed both the young people and their parents to have concerns about starting secondary school; however, parents were generally more concerned about the experience than the young people themselves whose anxieties appeared to subside relatively quickly. This is consistent with previous research by King (2009). For the young people, the main source of anxiety was related to their individual safety and vulnerability around older pupils, with these students described by Daniel as “gangs”. This has been

recognised in the wider transition literature which described children fearing for their safety when moving to secondary school (Lucey & Reay, 2000).

Nonetheless, this increased focus on social fears was not revealed in previous research into secondary transition for adopted pupils (King, 2009) and offers an interesting area for further exploration.

In addition to these social fears, both the young people and their parents also raised concerns around the practical challenges inherent in the new school environment and the increases in independence expectations, teacher expectations and learning demands. Previous research has also found both LAC and adopted young people to find the first few weeks of secondary school challenging due to similar factors (Barratt, 2011; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Crowley, 2019; King, 2009; Selwyn & Meakings, n.d.). Moreover, the findings of the current research are similar to those reported in the wider transition literature (e.g. Lucey & Reay, 2000; Zeedyk et al., 2003) and therefore may not be directly related to the adoptive status. However, these anxieties may be more significant for adopted young people, who have been found to be more likely to experience difficulties with executive functioning, learning and managing social expectations (Behen et al., 2008; Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Wretham & Woolgar, 2017).

Despite similarities between the young people and their parents in terms of anxiety, one source of anxiety raised only by the parents concerned the increased expectations around homework. For both parents, encouraging their child to complete homework offered a source of desperation which impacted the whole of family life, with Jessica speaking about her daughter Violet banging her head against the wall when asked to complete homework. For the young

people, there appeared to be a separation between home and school with homework classified as a 'home' experience and thus not raised during an interview about 'school' experiences. Whilst research by King (2009) referenced the impact of executive functioning difficulties on the completion of homework, it did not reveal refusal to complete homework amongst adopted young people. This apparent compartmentalisation offers an interesting avenue which may benefit from further exploration as well as providing implications for supporting adopted young people in school.

5.2.1.1 Change, Loss and Opportunity.

Despite feelings of anxiety, both the young people and their parents also spoke about the new opportunities provided by secondary school, including new friendships, different lessons and developing a new identity. These feelings of excitement are consistent with the transition literature involving both adopted and looked-after young people (Brewin & Statham, 2011; King, 2009). Indeed, a reflective account written by a CAMHS professional, revealed some adopted young people to welcome the opportunity to reinvent themselves which is provided by the move to secondary school (Barratt, 2011).

For the young people, the realisation of the enormity of the change appeared to be a previously unconsidered yet empowering learning experience, with Violet describing it as a "*new chapter like of your life*". Whilst there was a feeling amongst the young people that being at secondary school resulted in increased choice, freedom and responsibility, there were also concerns around dealing with these changes and the accompanying increases in independence. This mixture of optimism and concern is also reflected in the wider transition literature (e.g. Lucey & Reay, 2000) and indicates a sense of anticipation for

change amongst an adoptive population who have often experienced frequent changes in their lives.

All the young people and one parent spoke about the different sources of loss they had felt throughout the transition experience. For the young people this loss was often related to the friendships, teacher relationships and nurturing school environment they had experienced at primary school as well as no longer being amongst the oldest year group in the school. Such feelings of loss are in line with the wider transition literature which reveals the increase in independence at secondary school to come at the cost of the increased nurture provided at primary school (Lucey & Reay, 2000). Whilst this loss of nurture is not unique to adopted young people, for this group who have often experienced disrupted early parental nurturing experiences, the removal of the nurture provided by primary schools may require more significant adjustment. The lack of parental acknowledgement of these potential sources of loss may indicate limited awareness of the importance of these relationships for their children at times of change and thus how such relationships can be maintained over time.

5.2.2 Managing the Self

In managing the feelings of anxiety towards starting secondary school, all participants drew on various sources of resilience, ranging from individual sources to wider external supports. For the young people, these individual sources related to attempts to learn the school layout and processes for themselves as well as accepting the need to adapt to new situations. Through these discussions, all three participants appeared committed to making their secondary school experience a successful one, therefore demonstrating

personal awareness and an internal locus of control (Newman & Blackburn, 2002).

For both parents, personal knowledge of school systems served as a powerful protective factor which they often drew on to make sense of their personal experiences, such as a lack of communication from the secondary school and how to overcome challenges with homework. Indeed, for both parents, observing their child successfully manage the experience of starting secondary school served as a further protective factor which helped to provide reassurance and minimise anxieties.

In addition to these individual protective factors, the interviews also revealed the existence of external protective factors, including both friendship networks and close mentor relationships with school staff (Newman & Blackburn, 2002).

These findings are therefore consistent with research exploring specific secondary transition support for LAC (Drew & Banerjee, 2019). In the current research, both peer and staff relationships and successful school experiences overall, served to result in positive developments to individual resilience, self-esteem and wellbeing and thus further enhance the secondary experiences of the young people (Gilligan, 2000; Neman & Blackburn, 2002). Indeed positive school experiences can alter an individual's developmental pathway and support them to overcome early difficulties (Gilligan, 2000), thus highlighting the importance of not applying the deficit nature of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) in isolation.

5.2.3 Attachment

Relationships with peers and teachers were raised by both the young people as well as their parents, highlighting the significance of this area for all participants. Whilst two young people and both parents spoke about their anxieties around social belonging, they also all appeared hopeful about the opportunities to build friendships. This importance of peer relationships for the adopted young people was consistent with previous research, both with adoptive families (Cooper & Johnson, 2007) as well as with families caring for LAC (Brewin & Statham, 2011). Indeed for Violet, her peer relationships appeared fundamental to the overall experience and more important than her relationships with teachers. This reflects the wider literature which indicates peers to increasingly become more significant sources of attachment during the teenage years (Crowley, 2009; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Moreover, for Violet, peer relationships served as a protective factor at times of secondary school stress, including during the transition itself. This finding is consistent with previous research exploring secondary transition for LAC (Brewin & Statham, 2011) as well as the wider transition literature which highlights peers to share anxiety as well as support one another when going through the same transition experience (Weller, 2007). Positive social skills and the existence of a peer group therefore appear to support the promotion of individual resilience during secondary transition for adopted young people (Newman & Blackburn, 2002) with this finding also consistent with the wider transition literature (Zeedyk et al., 2003).

Conversely, one young person spoke about difficulties with social relationships. This finding is in line with previous research which has highlighted adopted

young people to feel anxious when interacting with others and have underdeveloped social skills (Barratt, 2011; Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Crowley, 2019; Gilling, 2014). Similarly, whilst Jessica believed her daughter to experience some difficulties with friendships; Violet did not feel the same, instead expressing her skill in making friends. This discrepancy is interesting and indicates differing perceptions of social need within this parent-young person pairing.

Both groups of participants also spoke about the importance of relationships with understanding members of staff. For Anne, this member of staff provided a sense of reassurance that her daughter would have someone in school to speak to if necessary. Moreover, knowing there was an adult in school who would listen to and support the young people appeared to provide them with a source of containment (Bion, 1961). Indeed previous research has also found the presence of supportive members of school staff to increase CYP's psychological well-being and engagement with education (Woolley & Bowen, 2007). The importance of these relationships for the participants in the current research is consistent with research by King (2009), which revealed adoptive parents to speak about the benefits of pastoral support provided by school staff. The current research extends these previous findings by implicating the positive impacts of a 'key worker' role as opposed to pastoral support more generally, a role that is seldom allocated in secondary education. Indeed the impacts of this role were frequently raised by the young people themselves and are also referenced in guidance produced by AUK (n.d.).

5.2.4 Adoptive Identity

For all participants the identity as an adoptive family was central to the secondary school experience. For four participants, disclosing the adoptive identity as well as personal experiential knowledge around the possible impacts of this identity was seen as necessary for both academic and emotional support to be provided. This finding is consistent with King (2009) who revealed adopted children to find awareness of their adoptive status amongst school staff to be a supportive factor in enabling a successful transition to secondary school.

The current research extends this previous research by offering greater insight into the importance of school staff understanding the needs of adopted children more generally with this raised by both young people and parents. For Emma and Anne, this awareness appeared to exist as they spoke about the flexibility in the approach of the school as well as the availability of staff to provide individual support. For Daniel and Jessica however, a perceived lack of understanding of adoption amongst school staff was evident throughout their interviews with Daniel adding that his second term at secondary school would be improved if there was an increased understanding amongst staff. Therefore whilst King (2009) found parents to want the adoptive status to be used only when an issue arose, the participants in the current research appeared to hope the adoptive status would be used to plan proactive support. The current findings therefore indicate the potential for increased recognition amongst school staff to significantly alter an individual's secondary school experience, in line with a survey by AUK (2014).

These varied accounts in the understanding of school staff reflect findings of previous surveys of adoptive families (AUK, 2014, 2018; Selwyn & Meakings,

n.d.) as well as reflective papers which discuss the misperceptions around adoption as a 'fix' (Barratt, 2011; Dunstan, 2010; Gore Langton, 2017; Syne et al., 2012). Similarly, whilst research by Cooper and Johnson (2007) and King (2009) revealed the majority of parents to be satisfied with the school's response to their child's adoptive status, concerns were also raised regarding the understanding of the needs of adopted children more generally. This level of understanding appears dependent on the individual school ethos as well as the tailored approaches which are implemented. Research by both Webber (2017) and Syne et al. (2012) provide examples of school approaches which recognise the possible needs of adopted young people and subsequently implement strategies to support these needs. Implementing similar approaches in secondary schools appeared important for the participants in the current research. Nonetheless, whilst this need for recognition may not be unique to adopted young people, for those in the current research, it may serve to meet a need to be remembered whilst simultaneously avoiding excessive attention, perhaps linked to early childhood experiences.

5.2.4.1 Difference.

Whilst there was a wish for school staff to be aware of the adopted status, all participants expressed a wish for this not to result in either themselves or their child being viewed and treated as different. For the young people, their adoption was a significant aspect of their identity; however, how they were viewed by their peers was also important, with this almost resulting in a conflict between the self and relationships with others. In particular, Violet expressed a wish for her peers to know about adoption in general but not for them to know which children were adopted specifically, also speaking about other pupils using

adoption as an insult. This potential for teasing related to the adopted status has also been found in previous research and charity publications (e.g. AUK, 2018; Selwyn et al., 2014). Neil (2012) found over 50% of the sample of 43 adopted CYP to have experienced teasing from their peers about their adoption. This research also revealed several participants to have experienced pity from their peers about being adopted, a finding echoed by Violet who explained that her peers often apologise to her about her adopted status. The references to difference by the young people in this research represent an interesting finding suggesting them to be increasingly aware of their identity formation and peer relationships during the time of secondary transition.

For parents, there was an implication that 'labelling' their child as adopted had the potential to result in a self-fulfilling prophecy taking place (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Similar concerns have been revealed in previous research with the lack of awareness amongst school staff found to result in the setting of low self-fulfilling expectations as well as the blaming of the child for playground-based incidents (Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Dunstan, 2010; Gilling 2014).

5.2.4.2 Communication.

Related to this understanding and raised in both parent interviews and one child interview was the communication and sharing of information between the family and the secondary school staff. Barratt (2011) speaks about the expertise adoptive parents are often required to develop in order to address difficulties their children face in school. For Anne, the secondary school provided her with the opportunity to share her expertise; however, the same was not true for Jessica, resulting in a feeling of being devalued and ignored. This led to her questioning both her identity as a parent as well as the role of an adoptive

parent, with this representing a novel finding which would be interesting to explore further. Nonetheless, these issues with home-school communication have also been revealed in previous literature with this identified as a factor which can have significant influence on a family's experience if implemented well (Cooper & Johnson, 2007; Dunstan, 2010; Gilling, 2014; King, 2009).

5.2.4.3 Specific Transition Support.

One final area to emerge from the interviews concerned the specific transition support offered by both the primary and secondary schools. For those participants who did mention transition support, there did not appear to be any support offered which was additional to or different from that provided for the wider cohort. Anything that was provided was often following a parental request, as opposed to the schools implementing a proactive approach. This perceived lack of additional targeted support is consistent with the existing transition literature for adopted and looked-after pupils (Brewin & Statham, 2011; King, 2009). Nonetheless, the associated dislike expressed by the parents in the current research is inconsistent with research by King (2009) in which adoptive parents were generally happy with the support provided for their children. Instead, the current research revealed parents to believe their child should have received additional support at this transition time, reflecting the findings of Cooper and Johnson (2007). Indeed, one young person also spoke about a wish for additional support, indicating the importance of involving the adopted young people in transition planning.

5.2.5 Applying Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

As outlined in Chapter 2, the current research was placed within a theoretical framework of Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) (Figure 2.1).

This framework provides one lens for viewing the experience of starting secondary school and therefore considering those factors which supported a positive experience for the participants in the current research. The findings discussed in this section are consistent with previous literature on the secondary transition for LAC (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Drew & Banerjee, 2019).

- Within-child level: the individual young person's, needs, hopes and anxieties about transition were considered to affect their ability to manage the new experiences, with all the young people able to positively managing these changes overall.
- Microsystem: both the adopted young people and their parents made reference to immediate systems with which the children interacted, namely, peer groups, school staff and specific school-based transition activities. Whilst all these systems offered support and protection, the importance of not over-highlighting the child's adoptive identity was raised by all participants in order to avoid a feeling of difference.
- Mesosystem: the communication between the home and school systems, including the sharing of information about the child's adoptive status emerged as critical to the parents' experiences. Information sharing between the primary and secondary school was also key, particularly for the young people who expressed a wish for more information about their adoption to be passed on to the secondary school in order for their experiences to be improved.

- **Macrosystem:** participants made reference to the understanding, awareness and acceptance of the possible needs of adopted young people within the secondary school culture. Where there appeared to be a more flexible and understanding culture, experiences were improved.
- **Chronosystem:** all participants spoke about the change that occurred as a result of the school transition as well as the associated opportunities for a fresh start. Where change was minimised, the overall experiences appeared more positive.

5.2.6 Summary of Findings

In summary, the research has revealed the experience of starting secondary school to generally be a positive one for the adopted young people who were adaptable to change and benefitted from the increased independence (Barratt, 2011). Whilst there were initial sources of anxiety for all the young people, these concerns often subsided across the school term owing to the presence of several protective factors which had served to increase individual resilience. For the two adoptive parents however the experience was mixed and whilst one parent felt included in her daughter's education and perceived the school to be flexible and understanding, for the other parent the experience was comprised of a sense of disconnect, a perception of a lack of understanding within the school and feeling devalued as a parent. Where experiences were most positive, the secondary school was often smaller, had greater flexibility and had invested increased amounts of time in building and sustaining positive relationships with the family. Finally, for all participants, the adoptive identity was a key aspect of the overall experience and it was important for all

participants that this did not define the child or result in them being viewed as different amongst their peers.

Whilst the methodology of the current research does not allow for a specific determination of the extent to which the findings are unique to adopted young people, it is possible to consider the findings in the context of previous research involving young people living with foster carers or their birth parents. The findings relating to feelings of anxiety, loss and anticipation, as well as those which referred to individual resilience and the importance of peer relationships are consistent with the wider transition literature (e.g. Lucey & Reay, 2000; Zeedyk et al., 2003) and therefore do not appear unique to the experience of adopted young people. Conversely, the findings related to the importance of key staff relationships may be more unique to adopted young people who may benefit from such nurturing and supportive adult relationships at times of significant change. Similarly, the findings which explore the adoptive identity and the ideas of difference, home-school communication and specific transition support appear to be unique to the experience of adopted young people and their parents. Whilst it is deemed compulsory to share the identity of a LAC, the same is not true for an adoptive child, with this having the potential for staff to be unaware of the possible impacts of adoption on individual identity, appropriate sources of support and the importance of increased communication with the family. For these reasons, the findings of the current research represent a mixture of those considered unique to adopted young people and those considered to be representative of the wider school population.

5.3 Critical Review of the Research

In conducting practitioner research it is important to acknowledge both the strengths and limitations of a study; these are addressed below.

5.3.1 Strengths

At the time of writing, the researcher is not aware of any additional research which involves gathering a detailed understanding of the experience of starting secondary school as an adoptive family using a qualitative IPA design. This research design enabled a deeper understanding of the subjective experience as opposed to using a large and broad sample of participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The matched-pairs approach further enhanced this understanding with the findings from each child and parent used to strengthen and complement one another, thus resulting in a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of starting secondary education. By using SSIs, the researcher was able to build rapport with participants and be flexible in her approach, adapting to the needs of the participants depending on the language and comments they offered. Finally, the process for conducting the analysis was clearly documented and shared with the research supervisor, offering transparency in how the data was interpreted and thus increasing the trustworthiness of the research

The current research offered a distinctive contribution to the existing literature through the inclusion of participants who had historically been underrepresented in previous research. Unlike much of this existing literature, the current research aimed to prioritise the views of adopted young people, both in sharing their experiences as well as in the process of research design. Whilst the research was initiated by the researcher, key decisions about the research process were

made collaboratively with adopted young people, with those adopted young people involved as participants also being fully informed of what the research would involve. This research is therefore consistent with the current socio-political drive for person-centred ways of working (DfE, DoH, 2015).

5.3.2 Limitations

Owing to the qualitative design of the current research and the small number of participants, it is not possible to claim that the findings constitute a widespread understanding of the experience of starting secondary school as an adoptive family. Indeed, several potential participants chose not to be involved in the research, citing the research interview to be an additional stressor when they were already finding the start of secondary school to be a significant challenge. For this reason, those who did choose to participate may have represented a subpopulation of adopted young people who had had a more positive secondary transition experience. The findings gathered and conclusions drawn may therefore not represent the experiences of all adopted young people when starting secondary school, particularly those for whom the experience was one of significant challenge. Similarly, as noted by Stams et al. (2000), the lack of information on the pre-adoption history of each child may be an additional limitation which impacts this generalisability of findings. Instead the findings can only be said to reflect the experiences of those involved in the research and both the school and local contexts in which they reside.

A further limitation concerns the use of SSIs as the only method of data collection which, owing to their personal and direct nature, may have deterred potential participants from coming forward. Using alternative methods such as questionnaires or focus groups may have resulted in a greater number of

participants and therefore a larger data set. Indeed, the parents who did participate were both employed in education-based careers and therefore may reflect a certain subsection of adoptive families who are aware of educational processes and confident to speak about their own experiences. This lack of diversity amongst the participants may therefore mean the findings are not representative of the adoptive parent population.

The current research does not allow the researcher to determine whether there were aspects of the participants' experiences which were unique to their adoptive situation or which were similar to children living with their birth families. It is also recognised that collecting data after one term at secondary school may not provide a detailed exploration of the experience as the participants were likely to be in a 'honeymoon' period in which they were still adjusting to their new environments.

One final limitation relates to the use of IPA which requires some homogeneity in the sample in order for the across-case analysis to be relevant. Whilst the current sample had a degree of homogeneity in the respect that all participants had experienced starting secondary school either directly (children) or indirectly (parents), the specific nature of this experience was different for both groups. This meant that it was difficult to combine both data sets in order to look for higher-order themes across all cases. The researcher attempted to mitigate the effects of this lack of homogeneity by utilising a matched-pairs approach; however, complete matching was not entirely possible as one parent did not wish to participate. Owing to these difficulties identifying shared themes, the researcher chose to report any themes which were evident in both parental

accounts, even if this theme did not occur within 50% of the total number of participants.

5.4 Dissemination of Findings

To enable the research to advocate for the population involved, dissemination of the findings was considered essential. This dissemination will be decided in collaboration with the research consultants; however, is likely to involve sharing the findings with the wider adoptive community, professionals who support these families and the participants themselves.

5.4.1 Dissemination to Participants

Following completion of the interviews, participants were informed they would receive a letter summarising the main findings with a link to the final thesis on the British Library's EThOS website. On sending this summary, participants will be informed that they are able to request a copy of their transcript if they wish, and if so, these will be emailed to a confidential email address with a disclaimer that the interpretations are the views of the researcher only. Potential participants who expressed an interest in the research but were unable to participate at the time will also be emailed the summary of the main findings and link to the online thesis.

5.4.2 Dissemination to Stakeholders

Decisions on how to share the findings with the wider adoptive community and with schools will be decided in collaboration with the research consultants as they were interested in being involved in this stage of the research. This may involve the preparation of a leaflet or presentation detailing the key findings and

recommendations on supporting secondary school transition for adoptive families, with the precise format to be decided through a collaborative process. Findings will also be shared with the various stakeholders who assisted with the research, including the Adoption Service in the two neighbouring LAs and the Virtual School.

In addition, the researcher will present the key findings and implications for EP practice to the LA EPS with the potential for this presentation to be done collaboratively alongside the research consultants. Looking further ahead, the possible publication of this research will enable access by the wider academic community in order to inform future research.

5.5 Implications for Practice

Consideration of the implications both for EPs as well as other professionals supporting the adoptive population formed an important part of the research process. It was hoped that this research could support the development of evidence-based interventions designed to target a range of factors identified as important in supporting the transition to secondary school for adoptive families. Possible interventions which enable the child's voice to be heard, promote social and emotional development, and provide a nurturing and understanding school culture could therefore serve to enhance the educational experiences of this population.

Moreover, the findings highlighting peer relationships as both a source of loss as well as a protective factor during times of transition, may offer a further area in which to target support. Owing to the potential significance of these peer

relationships for adopted young people, interventions which acknowledge the possible impacts of loss, including any connections to early experiences of loss of the birth family, may be crucial in supporting these individuals to understand and manage changes in their peer relationships. Furthermore, interventions which aim to strengthen existing peer relationships prior to and during secondary transition may offer an additional source of resilience at these times of change, with young people then able to offer support to one another when going through the same transition experience (Weller, 2007).

5.5.1 Implications for EP Practice

Owing to their role working with individuals, school systems, and wider professional and community groups, EPs are well positioned to support adoptive families through educational transitions as well as with educational experiences more broadly.

5.5.1.1 Supporting Individual Pupils.

EPs could utilise their therapeutic skills to provide either individual or small group interventions which aim to target social and emotional skills amongst those adopted young people who experience the greatest challenges when starting secondary school. It may also be beneficial for EPs to work alongside school staff to support them to deliver such interventions with such an approach providing support for individual pupils whilst simultaneously increasing expertise within schools. Whilst the onus is on schools to provide transition support for pupils, the content of such packages appears to be dependent on the resources available. Owing to their role across both primary and secondary schools, EPs are well placed to coordinate a joint approach which aims to identify those adopted young people who may be most vulnerable to experiencing difficulties

during the transition. This role could involve both knowledge sharing and joint problem-solving to ensure primary school endings are managed appropriately and tailored packages of support are implemented and reviewed (e.g. Syne et al., 2012). Asking the young people what support they feel would be helpful would also help to develop their sense of self-efficacy by engaging them in preparing for the change (Gilligan, 2000).

5.5.1.2 Supporting Parents.

It may be beneficial for EPs to work directly with adoptive parents by providing opportunities for them to share their concerns and explore possible solutions either through small group sessions or individual consultations. Research by Osborne & Alfano (2011) and Syne et al. (2012) has revealed these consultation sessions to be positively received by both EPs and adoptive parents as they offer the opportunity to share worries, gain new insights and find ways forward. Increasing the use of such sessions across different LAs could also involve collaboration with other professionals, including social workers and clinical psychologists. Additionally, EPs could be involved in designing and/or delivering training to adoptive parents which is centred around how the possible difficulties experienced by adopted young people may impact their education as well as how parents can support with this.

5.5.1.3 Supporting Schools.

A lack of school awareness of adoption was raised by the majority of participants. It may therefore be beneficial for EPs to identify additional training needs for school staff, particularly on potential barriers to learning as well as the areas of attachment, identity and social and emotional development. Such training could also involve exploring curriculum adaptation (Barratt, 2011) and

the importance of using sensitive language which ensures that adopted young people do not feel different to their peers. EPs could also work in collaboration with senior school staff to identify how the pupil premium plus money could be used more effectively to improve the outcomes of adopted pupils.

EPs could work strategically with schools to create a school ethos which understands the profiles of adopted children, including the impact of early experiences on social, emotional and educational outcomes. This work could involve supporting schools to develop their whole school policies and practices in line with the Attachment Aware Schools Framework (Parker et al., 2016), the Adoption Friendly Schools package (Gore Langton & Boy, 2017), or a therapeutic Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy (PACE) attitude (Hughes, 2009, as cited in Webber, 2017). As part of this, EPs could highlight the benefits of providing a named member of staff with whom young people can share any worries or concerns, with this being particularly pertinent in secondary schools which often provide a less nurturing approach. Providing supervision for this member of staff may also be a further implication for EPs.

Finally, communication with school staff was a lived experience of both parent participants. EPs could therefore be involved in supporting schools to build links with adoptive families through helping to set up parent coffee mornings, or producing leaflets outlining the school's understanding of and support provided for adopted pupils.

5.5.1.4 Multi-Agency Working.

Owing to their role within the LA, EPs are well placed to work in collaboration with other professionals who support families formed through adoption, such as

Adoption Services and Virtual Schools. This work could involve the development of packages on how best to support adopted children in education as well the exploration of how pupil premium funding can be used to improve the social, emotional and educational outcomes of individual pupils through the use of additional interventions and resources.

5.6 Further Research

A key aim of the current research was to generate a greater understanding of the experience of starting secondary school following the recent legislative changes to include a greater focus on the needs of previously looked-after children. Nonetheless, the current research did not involve a comparison group comprised of participants who had been involved in the transition prior to these legislative changes, thus providing an avenue for future research. It is anticipated that such research may help to shed light on whether this legislation has had positive impacts on adopted families with the disclaimer that it would not be possible to attribute any positive impacts to the legislation alone.

Whilst the current study utilised an exploratory phenomenological approach, the insights generated were limited by the small number of participants in a localised area of England with both adoptive parents being employed in careers related to education. Future research could be conducted with a greater number of adoptive families from a more diverse range of backgrounds, careers and schools in order to explore whether there are any similarities or differences with the current research when exploring the secondary transition experience. Similarly, involving young people who are placed under alternative permanency

arrangements may also provide further insight; however, it is recognised that these may be difficult to reach populations.

As discussed in section 5.3.2, the methodology of the current research does not allow the researcher to determine which aspects of the experiences were unique to the adoptive status. Future research could involve the use of comparison groups such as LAC and birth families in order to explore whether there are any experiences which are unique to those families formed through adoption. Similarly, gathering background on the pre-adoptive history of each participant may also help to explore the potential influence of such factors on school experiences.

Moreover, the researcher is not currently aware of any published research which explores the secondary school experience for adoptive families more generally or indeed offers any longitudinal data to identify whether these CYP withdraw from secondary school before its completion. Whilst the current research did not involve gathering the views of school staff, the findings indicate that, despite the recent legislative changes, there continues to be gaps in staff knowledge around the potential needs of adopted CYP. Future research could involve exploring the views of school staff who hold varying roles within educational settings in order to further understand possible factors which contribute to successful and supported school experiences for adoptive families.

Finally, whilst the current research incorporated a participatory element, adoptive families continue to be a marginalised group. Further research could seek to expand on the participatory design through the participants themselves being involved in decisions relating to both the research topic and design.

5.7 Researcher Reflections and Reflexivity

Reflections on the process of conducting this research include consideration of possible sources of bias, the researcher's position and key learning.

Owing to the epistemological position and research design, this research does not claim to be objective. Instead it is acknowledged that the researcher's own experiences, knowledge and bias will influence the research process, the researcher's ideas around secondary school and the interpretations of the raw data. Whilst the researcher attempted to 'bracket' previous assumptions when conducting the analysis, it is recognised that this process is not faultless and as each interview was analysed, the knowledge gained influenced subsequent analyses. Further measures taken to minimise researcher bias involved maintaining a clear audit trail of the research process as well as keeping a research diary which contained written reflections on key decisions and the actions undertaken. Following completion of each interview, the researcher recorded key thoughts and responses in this diary which were then revisited to inform the data analysis with this analysis checked by the research supervisor to enhance research credibility.

5.7.1 Positioning

The researcher identifies as a TEP who was raised by her birth family with no personal understanding of the experience of being adopted. The non-adoptive status of the researcher was not communicated to the participants as it was thought this may influence the responses provided during the interviews. The researcher is aware that this research was guided by personal interests and

gaps in the existing literature, resulting in the self-positioning as a curious listener; however, one who was required to complete the research for qualification purposes.

When conducting the interviews, the researcher aimed to position herself as an advocate for the voices of the individuals by emphasising them to be the experts in their experiences. Despite attempts to ensure there was minimal power imbalance between the researcher and the participants, it was acknowledged that the researcher may have been afforded a position of authority. For the Year 7 participants, the researcher is aware that most adults working in schools are granted positions of authority by the children they work with, with the potential for the same to be true of the researcher. Whilst conducting the interviews away from school may have altered this positioning, the home location for one Year 7 participant interview did not appear to negate the researcher's apparent position of authority and power.

Moreover, through her role as a TEP, the researcher is aware of the position of power often afforded to EPs. It was hoped that by interviewing the parents at home, any power imbalances would be minimised; however, the mere presence of a professional may have impacted the reporting of personal experiences in order to minimise opportunities for personal judgement. It is therefore recognised that the parents may have interpreted their experiences prior to the interview taking place and that this may account for the challenges the researcher experienced when analysing the parents' data. Finally, it is acknowledged that one parent worked as an EP in the same LA as the researcher was on placement. Whilst the researcher and the participant were based in different teams and therefore did not have a close pre-established

working relationship, this dual relationship may have affected the positioning of both the researcher and the participant and therefore impacted the data gathered.

5.7.2 Key Learning

Owing to the personal nature of this section, it will be written in the first person. This research has been an interesting journey which has enabled me to explore several areas of interest. I felt passionate about challenging the educational misperceptions around adoption and therefore hoped to provide adoptive families with the opportunity to share their experiences and thus influence the practices which are designed to support them. Nonetheless, this research has also challenged my assumptions around the possible needs of adopted young people and reminded me to always consider the individual in context in my role as a TEP/EP. I feel privileged to have heard the stories of adoptive families and have been inspired by the resilience and positive 'can-do' attitudes displayed by the young people despite their historical childhood experiences.

This research experience has highlighted the power in gathering in-depth personal stories through the use of carefully-worded open questions. Reflecting on the interviews has enabled me to note the importance of considering how my language will be understood by those I work with as well as the importance of asking additional follow-up questions. I plan to use these reflections to inform my future practice as a TEP/EP. Finally, whilst I considered using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), choosing IPA and an idiographic presentation of the findings allowed for the addition of my own interpretations to the data as well as upheld my values of person-centred approaches. These values were

further upheld through utilising a participatory research design and I would be interested in engaging in similar research in the future.

5.8 Final Conclusions

Transition to secondary school is recognised as a challenging time for most young people. Yet, exploring the transition experience from the perspectives of adoptive families is an under-researched area, particularly prioritising the voices of the young people. The current findings indicated that whilst both adopted young people and their parents had concerns regarding the start of secondary school, these concerns often appeared to subside relatively quickly. Feelings of hope and excitement were also apparent and the young people appeared to enjoy the opportunities provided by secondary school and were quick to adapt to the changes, drawing on a range of sources of resilience.

The adoptive identity was integral to the secondary school experience for both the young people and their parents. Attending a school which displayed a greater understanding of the needs of adopted young people and increased flexibility resulted in a more positive experience overall. For all participants, the awareness of the adoptive identity was deemed almost essential to receiving both emotional and academic support, with an apparent wish for this status to be used proactively by staff as opposed to reactively when difficulties arose. Nonetheless, the challenge for schools is to ensure this status is recognised and addressed without it being used to label young people or result in them feeling different to their peers.

Whilst the young people in this study felt well supported in secondary school overall, there is an apparent need for schools to further increase their understanding of the potential needs of adopted young people and implement appropriate supportive strategies. Despite it being a role which is seldom allocated in secondary education, the positive impacts of a named 'key worker' for the young people were mentioned by several participants. Similarly, where parents had access to a member of staff with whom they had a positive relationship and felt valued as experts in their child's education, more positive secondary school experiences were reported. There is a need for secondary schools to develop relationships with both adopted young people and their parents with the potential for greater involvement from the Designated Teacher.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Further detail on the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to literature search 1

Research was included based on its relevance to children who had found permanence under one of the three formal permanency arrangements or who were considered to be currently looked-after by the UK care system. Research related to international adoption or international care arrangements were excluded due to added complexities in the care systems and language barriers associated with being adopted or fostered into a different country. Research was included if the child was educated by the UK education system. UK research was sought due to differences between adoption, care and education systems across countries and thus difficulties in comparing findings from different care and education systems.

Secondary transition experiences from the perspectives of children, parents and school staff were all included due to the paucity of research capturing the young people's views specifically. Articles which focused on transition to post-compulsory education and employment were excluded due to differences in the support provided to those over age 16 years. Articles which referred to home and school reintegration following a stay in out-of-home care were also excluded as such transitions involved child welfare and social care involvement in order to support a return to the biological family. Finally, as the current research aims to explore natural transition experiences, articles pertaining to specific implemented interventions designed to support school readiness or transition were excluded.

Articles from scholarly peer-reviewed journals as well as grey literature involving non-peer reviewed articles, unpublished doctoral theses and charity conducted research were included to ensure a more comprehensive exploration of secondary transition experiences for permanently placed or looked-after children.

Appendix 2: Details of publications identified for critical review 1: permanently placed children or looked-after children and secondary transition

Authors, Date, Location	Research Title	Participants	Methodology & Relevant Findings
King (2009) UK	Adopted children and the transition from primary to secondary school: an examination of pupil, parent and teacher views.	20 adoptive parents, 11 adopted children, 4 secondary school teachers	<i>Questionnaires gathering both quantitative and qualitative data; focus group and interviews gathering qualitative data.</i> Overall, adoptive parents were more concerned about the transition than their adopted children. Children were aware of their own needs; however, were also excited about the new opportunities presented by secondary school. Some children did feel stressed when starting secondary school. Adoptive parents shared concerns regarding the lack of awareness of adoption amongst school staff as well as regarding how information about their child's adoptive status was shared between staff.
Selwyn, Wijedasa & Meakings (2014) UK	Beyond the adoption order: challenges, interventions and adoption disruption: research report	Survey of 390 adoptive parents. Interviews with 70 adoptive parents, 12 CYP, 10 social workers, 12 adoption support managers	<i>Survey with adopted parents gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Interviews with adoptive parents, adopted CYP, adoption support managers and social workers gathering qualitative data.</i> The transition to secondary school caused additional stress for many young people. Parents felt that their children did not cope well with the larger and more impersonal nature of secondary school and the increased expectations of independence. Adopted young people and adoptive parents also reported bullying in secondary school as a result of the adoptive status.

Selwyn and Meakings (n.d.) UK	Beyond the adoption order (Wales): discord and disruption in adoptive families: final report to the Welsh Government	20 adoptive parents	<i>Semi-structured interviews gathering qualitative data.</i> Sixteen of the twenty young people had made the transition to secondary school. For ten young people this had been a challenging time and they did not cope well with the larger and more impersonal nature of secondary school and the increased expectations of independence. Some had received involvement from school SENCos both leading up to and following the transition to secondary school. Two adoptive parents wished they had addressed secondary transition better.
Brewin & Statham (2011) UK	Supporting the transition from primary school to secondary school for children who are Looked After.	14 looked-after children, 22 foster carers, 19 teachers, 3 looked-after children education support officers, group of social workers (number not specified)	<i>Semi-structured interviews and focus group gathering qualitative data.</i> A range of factors at different systemic levels can help or hinder the transition to secondary school, therefore indicating a need for holistic, individual and enhanced support at this time. Children had fears about starting secondary school; however, also spoke about the new opportunities this change had provided. Carers were aware of their child's needs and the potential impacts on the transition experience. Sharing information between schools as well as minimising differences between looked-after children and their peers were deemed important to a successful transition.
Drew & Banerjee (2019) UK	Supporting the education and well-being of children who are looked-after: what is the role of the virtual school?	A member of virtual school staff from 29 local authorities (19 head teachers, 5 staff at management level, 5	<i>Online survey gathering qualitative data.</i> Four overarching themes emerged from conducting inductive thematic analysis: enhanced learning opportunities, specific transition support, well-being and relationships, and raising awareness. Specific transition support was provided for looked-after children both building up to and during the transition with this support focusing on social and emotional skills as well as educational attainment.

		alternative members of virtual school team)	This support was provided at a range of systemic levels, including direct support for young people and school staff and increased collaborative working between agencies.
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Appendix 3: Summary of the critiques for each publication identified for critical review 1: permanently placed children or looked-after children and secondary transition. The CASP Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2018) was used to analyse each publication

CASP Question	King (2009)	Selwyn et al. (2014)	Selwyn & Meakings (n.d.)	Brewin & Statham (2011)	Drew & Banerjee (2019)
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – aims of the research are stated alongside relevance of research to wider context	Yes – aims, goals and objectives of research are clearly stated alongside the relevance of the research to support for adoptive families	Yes – aims, goals and objectives of research are clearly stated alongside the relevance of the research to support for adoptive families	Yes – aims of the research are stated alongside relevance of research to wider context	Yes – aims and research questions are clearly stated; relevance of research is clear
2. Is qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes – as research aims to explore the subjective experiences of participants	Yes – as research aims to explore the subjective experiences of participants	Yes – as research aims to explore the subjective experiences of participants	Yes – as research aims to explore the subjective experiences of participants	Yes - as research aims to explore the actions and subjective opinions of participants
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Can't Tell – mixed methods design addresses research aims; no discussion on decision of methods	Can't Tell – mixed methods design addresses research aims; no discussion on decision of methods	Can't Tell – qualitative design addresses research aims; no discussion on decision of methods	Yes – qualitative design addresses research aims; clear why interview method was used	Yes – qualitative design addresses research aims; clear why survey method was used
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the	Yes – clear discussions of recruitment and participant selection	Yes – clear discussions of recruitment and participant	Yes – clear discussions of recruitment and participant	Yes – clear discussions of recruitment strategy and participant	Yes – clear discussions of recruitment and participant selection

aims of the research?		selection, including who was selected and why	selection, including who was selected and why	selection	
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't Tell – clear description of how data was collected; unclear how survey was designed; type of interview schedule and design are unclear	Yes – clear and explicit description of how data was collected, including how interview schedule was developed; no justification for methods chosen	Yes – clear and explicit description of how data was collected, including how interview schedule was developed; no justification for methods chosen	Yes – clear and explicit description of how data was collected, including how interview schedule was designed	Yes – clear description of how data was collected, including how survey was developed and its content
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No – no consideration of role of researchers and potential bias	No – no consideration of role of researchers and potential bias	No – no consideration of role of researchers and potential bias	No – no consideration of role of researchers and potential bias	No – no consideration of role of researchers and potential bias
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	No – not clear how ethical issues were considered and ethical standards maintained, particularly given the vulnerability of participant group	No – not clear how ethical issues were considered and ethical standards maintained, particularly given the topic around adoption disruption and possibility for emotional distress	No – not clear how ethical issues were considered and ethical standards maintained, particularly given the topic around adoption disruption and possibility for emotional distress	Can't Tell - detail is provided around ethical approval and consent; limited detail provided regarding additional ethical standards	Can't Tell – detail is provided around ethical approval and consent; limited detail to assess whether ethical standards were maintained

8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't Tell – no description of the data analysis process or how themes were derived from the data; some data are presented to support the findings	Can't Tell – data analysis appears rigorous and well-presented with description of thematic analysis process; sufficient data to support findings; not clear how themes were predetermined prior to data collection and how new themes were derived from data	Can't Tell – data analysis appears rigorous and well-presented with description of thematic analysis process; sufficient data to support findings; not clear how themes were predetermined prior to data collection and how new themes were derived from data	Can't Tell – clear description of data analysis process and how themes were derived from the data; no data is presented to support the findings	Can't Tell – data analysis appears well-presented; coding validity was checked with participants to ask whether themes accurately reflected provision; unclear how themes were derived from the data through thematic analysis; no supporting data
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't Tell – findings are presented but not explicitly related to research aims; no discussion of credibility	Yes – findings are explicit and discussed in relation to research aims; no discussion of credibility	Yes – findings are explicit and discussed in relation to research aims; no discussion of credibility	Yes – findings are explicit and discussed in relation to research aims, triangulation is discussed	Yes – findings are explicit and discussed in relation to aims; discuss respondent validation
10. How valuable is the research?	Discussion of implications for practice; no discussion of findings in relation to existing research	Discussion of contribution of research, as well as implications for practice and future research	Discussion of contribution of research, as well as implications for practice and future research	Discussion of contribution of research, as well as implications for practice and future research	Discussion of contribution of research, as well as implications for practice and future research

Appendix 4: Further detail on the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to literature search 2

Research was included based on its relevance to the educational experiences of children who had found permanence under one of the three formal permanency arrangements as well as the educational experiences of adoptive parents. Research related to children who were placed under an informal kinship arrangement or those still under local authority care was excluded. As before, research related to international permanency arrangements or education of children outside the UK education system was excluded owing to differences between both adoption and education systems across countries. UK research was therefore only included due to difficulties in comparing findings from different adoption and education systems.

Educational experiences of adopted children and adoptive parents for both primary and secondary school were included due to the paucity of research about secondary school specifically. Research needed to involve gathering the direct experiences of adopted children or adoptive parents about education and school. Articles which involved gathering the views of school staff, EPs or other multi-agency professionals about the educational experiences of adoptive families were excluded from the review as the researcher was interested in first-hand accounts from the families themselves. Only articles from peer-reviewed journals were included in order to ensure high-quality scholarly research.

Appendix 5: Details of publications identified for critical review 2: permanently placed children and educational experiences

Authors, Date, Location	Research Title	Participants	Methodology & Relevant Findings
Crowley (2019) UK	Exploring the views and perceptions of adopted young people concerning their education and social development: an interpretative phenomenological analysis.	Four adopted young people aged 10-16 years	<i>Semi-structured interviews gathering qualitative data and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.</i> Five themes were identified: identity and self, relationships, school, attachment and adoptive status. The success of peer relationships was mixed with references made to bullying or teasing regarding the adoptive status and thus conscious attempts to hide this identity. SEND was a key area for three participants. The transition to secondary school was found to impact self-esteem as well as bullying from peers.
Gilling (2014) UK	Jasper's story: 'letting me down and picking me up' – one boy's story of despair and hope at primary schools in England.	One adopted child aged 12 years	<i>Case study account gathering qualitative data.</i> The child faced difficulties in his social, emotional and academic development. He had a challenging school experience at his first primary school due to a lack of awareness amongst staff of the needs of adopted children or how to support these needs. Communication with the family was also poor. Conversely, the child had a more successful experience at his second primary school owing to greater understanding amongst staff and positive communication with the family.
Cooper & Johnson	Education: the views of adoptive parents.	100 adoptive parents	<i>Questionnaire gathering quantitative and qualitative data.</i> Relationships were important for adopted

(2007) UK		33 adopted children	children. Adopted children are more likely to have SEND or experience social or learning difficulties in school; however, positive educational experiences are the norm. Adoptive parents favoured schools which have a greater understanding of adoption and maintain good communication with parents. Adoptive parents felt adopted children needed additional support at times of transition.
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Appendix 6: Summary of the critiques for each publication identified for critical review 2: permanently placed children and educational experiences. The CASP Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2018) was used to analyse each publication

CASP Question	Crowley (2019)	Gilling (2014)	Cooper & Johnson (2007)
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – aims and research questions are clearly stated; relevance of research is clear and research is placed within the wider context	No – no clear statement on the aims of the research; aims are implicitly suggested; research is placed within wider context	Yes – purpose of research is clearly stated; relevance of research is clear and research is placed within the wider context
2. Is qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes - as research aims to explore the subjective opinions of participants	Yes - as research aims to explore the subjective opinions of participants	Yes - as research aims to explore the subjective opinions of participants
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes – qualitative design addresses research aims; clear why semi-structured interview method was used alongside IPA methodology	Yes – case study design addresses research objectives and clear why design was chosen; justification is provided for design	Yes - qualitative design addresses research aims; clear why survey method was used in order to reach a wider population
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes – clear discussion of recruitment procedures and participant selection, including recruitment difficulties	Yes – one family for a case study design; experience of family relevant for research objectives	Yes – clear discussion of recruitment procedures and participant selection
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't Tell – clear description of use of interview schedule and SSIs method; unclear how schedule was developed	Yes – an ethnographic approach was used to collect data – considered appropriate for the case study design	Yes – clear that an online survey was used and involvement of other professionals in design over survey is discussed; method is

			justified for a larger sample
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't Tell – researcher has not critically examined own role and potential bias during formulation of research questions; researcher does discuss IPA and interpretation	Yes – the paper acknowledges the epistemological position of constructionism and therefore the role of interpretation in presenting the findings	No – no consideration of role of researchers and potential bias
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't Tell – no detail is provided around ethical approval; some detail regarding consent and anonymity of participants	Can't Tell – limited detail is provided to assess whether ethical standards were maintained	No – not clear how ethical issues were considered and ethical standards maintained
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes – clear detail regarding the data analysis process and the role of the researcher during analysis	Not appropriate – publication presents the experience of one adoptive family	Can't Tell – no description of the data analysis processor how themes were derived from the data; some data are presented to support findings
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes – findings are explicit and discussed in relation to aims; no discussion of credibility	Yes – findings are explicitly stated; credibility of findings is paid due regard	Yes – findings are explicit; however are not directly linked to research aims and purpose
10. How valuable is the research?	Discussion of contribution of research , as well as implications for practice and future research	Discussion of contribution of research, as well as implications for practice	Discussion of contribution of research, as well as implications for practice

Appendix 7: Research paradigms (created from Guba & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2015)

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
Positivist	Realism – there is one true reality which can be discovered.	Objectivist – the researcher and the participants are independent. The results represent a factual truth.	Generally uses quantitative methods and randomised controlled trials.
Post-positivist	Critical realism – there is one true reality; however it cannot be known perfectly due to researcher limitations.	Modified objectivity – acknowledges the theories held by the researcher can objectively influence results. Aim is that researchers do not allow personal biases to influence results so should remain neutral. Therefore results are ‘probably’ true.	Primarily uses quantitative methods, often quasi-experimental methods. May sometimes use qualitative methods. Interventionist and decontextualized.
Constructionist	Relativist – multiple equally valid socially constructed realities.	Interactive link between researcher and participants resulting in the co-construction of knowledge and meanings.	Primarily qualitative with interaction and interpretation between researcher and participants (hermeneutical). Emphasis on dialectical and contextual factors.

Transformative	Multiple realities influenced by cultural, social and political, economic, ethnic, gender and disability values. Includes cultural theorists and participatory action researchers.	Knowledge is culturally, socially and historically constructed. Interactive relationship between researcher and participants. Proactive role of researcher to seek transformation and emancipation of marginalised groups (action agenda). Need to consider issues of power.	Qualitative (dialogic) linked to social, cultural or political action. Contextual and historical factors linked to oppression are described. Involvement of marginalised groups in research process to empower them to challenge issues important to them.
Pragmatic	There is a single reality that all individuals interpret individually and uniquely. Intersubjectivity as key element of social life. Effectiveness is used as criteria for judging value of research.	Accepts the existence of varied viewpoints so appropriateness of method to end result. Researcher needs to interact with participants to understand an issue appropriate to the particular study and the appropriate course of action.	Varied – method is appropriate to the purpose of the research and research questions to be addressed. Qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. Aim to create action for change in practice.

Appendix 8: Initial request for participants sent out via the LA Adoption Service database

Request for Participants – Understanding the School Experiences of Adopted Children

My name is Abi Fayers and I am now in the final year of a 3 year Doctorate Level Course to become an Educational Psychologist. I am undertaking this training at the University of East London and am also completing a professional placement in XXXX Educational Psychology Service.

As part of this training, I am undertaking a piece of research exploring the factors which support the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. The research aims to gather the views of adopted children who have recently transitioned to secondary school, as well as the views of their parents.

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

My research has been approved by the University of East London's School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

What are the benefits for you and your child?

Involvement in this research will provide a great opportunity for your child to learn research skills as well as help to identify what adopted children feel supported their transition to secondary school. By including these personal experiences, it is hoped that it will be possible to develop a greater understanding of what factors contribute towards a successful transition and therefore how to support additional adopted children in the future.

What does the research involve?

As indicated by the title of the research, this research is participatory. This means that it will also involve adopted children in the design of the research and in decisions regarding how the findings will be shared. The research is split into the following stages:

- Stage 1: During the first stage of the study, I will meet with adopted children currently in Year 9 or 10 at secondary school. I will meet with these individuals at school either individually or as a group (depending on school placement) in order to design the specific details of the research, including the research questions and appropriate data collection methods.

These individuals will become research consultants. This stage will be undertaken in September – October 2019.

- Stage 2: This stage of the study will involve individual meetings with adopted students who will be in either Year 7 or Year 8 during the academic year 2019-2020. These meetings will be used to gather information regarding secondary school transition. These individuals will be the research participants. This stage will be undertaken between October and December 2019.
- Stage 3: This stage of the study will involve a one-off focus group composed of adoptive parents whose adopted children have previously transitioned to secondary school. This group will be facilitated by myself and will involve discussion regarding the factors which supported their child's transition. This stage will be undertaken between September and December 2019.
- Stage 4: Following data collection and analysis, the research consultants from stage 1 will be contacted again in order to share the findings and seek their suggestions regarding how the findings will be shared. This stage will be undertaken between March and April 2020.

Request for individuals:

I am currently seeking the following individuals to take part in the research:

- Adopted children who will be either Year 7 or 8 during the academic year 2019-2020 who would like to share their transition experience, the factors which supported this transition and how they have been included since starting.
- Adoptive parents who have an adopted child in either Year 7 or 8 of secondary school who would like to share their views on the factors which supported their child's secondary transition.

It is essential that any child who wishes to take part is aware of their adoptive status. The child's school must also know this information.

This research is being undertaken independent to the XXXX Adoption Service. This service has not requested this research to take place and they are not involved in any aspects of the research. No member of the Adoption Team will be informed of the participation of yourself or your child. Access to services for both you and your child will not be impacted as a result of participation in this research.

If you or your child would like to participate in the study or you have any questions at this stage then please contact me at u1724877@uel.ac.uk or Abigail.Fayers@XXXX.gov.uk as soon as possible.

I will provide further information regarding the study, including the details regarding confidentiality and anonymity as well as more specific details about what participation will involve. You will also be provided with the appropriate consent forms for yourself and your child should you or your child wish to take part.

Many thanks in advance for any help that you are able to provide.

Kind regards

Abigail Fayers
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 9a: Research consultant information sheet



What was it like moving to secondary school? The chance to be involved in designing a project to explore this question.

Hello

My name is Abi Fayers and I am training to become an Educational Psychologist at the University of East London. My job involves working with children and young people, parents and school staff to help make school a good place to be!

I am doing a project to understand more about what adopted children in Year 7 and 8 and their parents think helped them when they moved from primary to secondary school. As part of this, I would really like some students in Year 9, 10 and 11 who have also been adopted to do this project with me.



Before you decide whether you would like to help me do this project, it is important that you read this sheet carefully. It will tell you what is going to happen.

Why have you been asked to be involved?

This is a participatory project. This means that I would like students in Years 9, 10 and 11 who have been adopted to help me design the project and help me make decisions about how to explore the move to secondary school. You don't need to be an 'expert' and you will learn some good skills about how to do research projects. You will not be judged in any way and you will be treated with respect.

What will happen?

We will meet two times. I will be there and there may also be some other Year 9, 10 or 11 students from your school who have also been adopted. When we are together we will discuss what we mean by the word 'research', how we plan a research project and how we can collect data / information. We will also do some little activities. Then, together, we will talk about the best way to explore the experience of moving to secondary school and the questions to ask. These meetings will be like informal conversations rather than proper lessons.

These meetings will take place at your school and will be either during the school day or once lessons have finished so that you do not miss too much of school. Each meeting should last about 1 hour. I will take notes about what we discuss; however, I will not write down your name or the name of your school.

A few months later, once I have spoken to Year 7/8 students about their move to secondary school, I will make contact with you again and ask you whether you have any ideas about what we should do with all the information I found out.

Do you have to take part?

It is up to you whether you would like to be involved. If you choose to be involved and then change your mind, you can stop taking part in the project without having to give a reason, that is fine.

If anything upsets you about the project then you can let me know and I will try to support you. If I can't support you then we will speak to a member of staff at school.

The Head Teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) of your school have been informed that you might take part in this project. Your parent(s) will also know. Apart from those people you tell, no one else will know you are involved.

What will happen with the things you say?

I will make notes during our meetings; however, I will not write down names so no one will know exactly what you said. I will not use your name or the name of your school in any reports which I write about the project.

If you tell me anything which makes me think that either you or someone else is not safe then I will have to tell a member of staff at your school.

What to do next?

If you would like to take part and help me with this project then please fill in the consent form and ask your parent to email it to me.

You can ask me any questions when we meet or you can ask your parent to email me.

Hopefully, with your help, we can find out some information about what adopted children think helped them when they moved from primary to secondary school. We can then use this information to make the transition to secondary school better for other adopted children in the future.

Thank you!

Abi

Appendix 9b: Research consultant consent form



Consent to be Involved in Designing a Research Project

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

Name of researcher: Abigail Fayers

Please read the following statements and circle **yes** or **no**. Please also write your name and the date at the bottom.

1. I confirm I have read and understood the information sheet for the project.	Yes	No
2. I would like to take part in the project.	Yes	No
3. I understand that the participation is voluntary and I can ask to stop being involved without having to give a reason.	Yes	No
4. I understand that no one will know exactly what I say because my name will not appear in the report.	Yes	No
5. I understand that if I say anything that makes the researcher think that I or someone else is at risk of harm then the researcher will have to tell a member of staff in the school.	Yes	No
6. I understand I can contact the researcher by speaking to my parent or the Head Teacher or SENCo at school.	Yes	No

Name:

Signature:

Date:



RESEARCH CONSULTANT INVITATION LETTER

Understanding your Child's School Experiences

Your child is being invited to take part in designing a research study. Before you decide whether you would like for your child to take part it is important that you understand what this will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

My name is Abi Fayers and I am in the third year of a 3 year Doctorate Level Course to become an Educational Psychologist. I am undertaking this training at the University of East London (UEL) and as part of this, I am also completing a professional placement in XXXX Educational Psychology Service.

As part of this Doctoral Level training, I am undertaking a piece of research exploring the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. The research aims to gather the views of adopted children in Year 7 and 8 and their parents and will be designed in collaboration with adopted children in Years 9-11.

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

What is the purpose of this research?

Research shows that adopted children often experience significantly high rates of exclusion from mainstream schools with a peak in this number of exclusions occurring in the first three years of secondary school. This high number of exclusions in Year 7-9 suggests the need for greater transition support for adopted children

during and following the move to secondary school. It is hoped that the recent legislation changes which reflect greater awareness of the needs of adopted children will contribute to educational improvements and increased inclusion of this group of children. This study aims to explore the factors which contribute to a successful transition to secondary school from the perspective of the adopted children themselves.

The information gained from this study will help to explore what adopted children believe supported their transition to secondary school and what the secondary school have done to support their subsequent inclusion. It is hoped that this will then inform future practice when working with additional adopted children who are undergoing secondary transition.

Why has my child been asked to participate?

As mentioned in the title of the research, this is a participatory piece of research. This means that I would like students in Years 9-11 who have been adopted to help me design the research as I believe that they are in a good position to know the questions to ask (the research consultants). Your child has therefore been invited to take part in the research design stage of this study as a research consultant because they have been adopted and experienced the transition to secondary school a few years ago. Permission to invite students to take part in the research is also being sought and agreed with the Head Teacher of your child's school.

What does the study involve?

If both yourself and your child agree to be involved, your child will be invited to take part in two separate meetings. These meetings will either be with just myself, or in a small group with other adopted children also in Years 9-11 if there are any other children in the same school who also wish to be involved in the research. During these meetings I will provide some teaching on what we mean by research, how we plan a research study and different methods of collecting data. This teaching will involve a combination of direct instruction, discussion and activities. Your child will then be asked for their thoughts on the best way to explore the experience of secondary transition and the questions to ask. The final decisions will be made in collaboration between myself and the children. These meetings will be like informal conversations.

The meetings will take place at your child's school in September-November 2019 and will be arranged for a time to ensure minimal disruption to learning. Each meeting should take approximately one hour. I will make sure that your child is happy to be involved each time we meet and a member of school staff will also be available at all times to support with safety on the school premises as well as providing emotional support should any child become upset etc. I will take notes about the decisions made; however, no individual names will be recorded.

Following these meetings, I will then speak with Year 7/8 students about their transition. Once this data has been collected, I will make contact with yourself and your child in order to share what has been found and ask your child whether they have any ideas about what they wish to happen with the findings (e.g. who to share them with). No names will be recorded. Your child's views will not be recorded alongside their personal details.

Does my child have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not to give permission for your child to be involved in the design of this study and should not feel coerced. Should you give permission for your child to take part and then either yourself or your child change your mind, you will have the right to withdraw your child from the research study without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. In addition, personal details and any information they have provided will be destroyed upon request. This will not affect access to services or school support for either yourself or your child.

Both you and your child will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and they will be treated with respect.

What are the benefits for my child?

Involvement in this research will provide a great opportunity for your child to learn research skills as well as help to identify what adopted children feel supported their transition to secondary school. By including these personal experiences, it is hoped that it will be possible to develop a greater understanding of what factors contribute towards a successful transition and therefore how to support additional adopted children in the future.

I will not be able to pay your child for being involved in the design of my research but their involvement would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. They will receive a small certificate as a thank you for all their help.

Will anyone know that my child is involved in designing this research?

The Head Teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) of your child's school are being informed of all the details of the research in order for me to meet with children on the school premises. It is essential that the school are aware of your child's adoptive status.

This research is being undertaken independent to the XXXX Post Adoption Service. They have not requested this research to take place and are not involved in any aspects of the research. They are aware that the research is being undertaken; however, no member of the Adoption Team will be informed of the participation of

yourself or your child. Access to services for both you and your child will not be impacted as a result of participation in this research.

Will information collected be confidential?

The privacy and safety of both yourself and your child will be respected at all times. Notes will be taken about the decisions made during the meetings. The names of the individual children involved will not be recorded alongside these decisions. In reporting on the research design and findings, I will not reveal the names of anyone involved or the schools involved. It must be stated that if any information is shared that means I feel that an individual either within or outside the meetings is at risk of harm or in danger, then I am required to share this with a member of school staff.

What will happen to the information that you provide?

Current Data Protection / GDPR legislation will be adhered to at all times. All personal details and consent forms collected for yourself and your child will be stored on a password protected removable drive and only I will have access to this information. Any contributions your child makes to the design of the research will not be recorded alongside their personal details. These anonymous contributions will be seen by my research supervisor, and other university-based professionals involved in my examination. A detailed account of the research will also be produced in the form of a Doctoral Thesis for the University of East London. I will also write to you and your child to explain the findings and outcomes of the research.

Following completion of the research and my professional qualification, all personal contact details for yourself and your child will be destroyed.

DBS Check

I have had an Enhanced Criminal Record Check and received a Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service dated July 2017.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns after reading this information sheet, then please do not hesitate to contact me at u1724877@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas,
School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you feel that your child may like to be involved in helping me to design this research then please complete the attached consent form and return to

Abigail Fayers
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Parental Consent to be Involved in Designing a Research Study

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

Name of researcher: Abigail Fayers

Please read the following statements and put a circle round your answers.

1. I confirm I have read and understood the information sheet for the study and been given a copy to keep. The nature, purposes and procedures of the research have been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information.	Yes	No
2. I am happy for my child (name).....to be involved in the study.	Yes	No
3. I understand that the participation is voluntary and I am able to withdraw my child from the study at any time, without affecting access to services.	Yes	No
4. I confirm that both my child and the child's school are aware of the adoptive status.	Yes	No
5. I understand that personal details will remain strictly confidential and only the researcher and research supervisor will have access to this information. I understand that any notes taken during the individual or group meetings will not include the names of those individuals involved in the discussions.	Yes	No
6. I understand the limits of confidentiality such that if my child mentions something that suggests that either they or someone else is at risk of harm then this information will have to be reported to a member of school staff.	Yes	No
7. I understand I can contact the researcher or the research supervisor using the email addresses provided.	Yes	No

Name of Child:

Child's School:

Your Name:

Relationship to Child:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 11a: Year 7 participant information sheet

What was it like moving to secondary school? The chance to share your experiences and the things that made it easier for you.

Hello

My name is Abi Fayers and I am training to become an Educational Psychologist at the University of East London. My job involves working with children and young people, parents and school staff to help make school a good place to be!

I am doing a project to understand more about what adopted children in Year 7 and 8 think helped them when they moved from primary to secondary school. I understand that you are adopted and I would like to invite you take part in the project.

Before you decide whether you would like to help me with this project, it is important that you read this sheet carefully. It will tell you what is going to happen.



What will happen?

I will come and meet with you once in school so you can tell me all about how you found the move to secondary school. We might also do some drawing. This meeting will be like having a chat and it will take place during the school day and will last about 1 hour.

The discussion we have will be recorded using a voice recorder and then I will write it up so that I can use your ideas and information. You will be able to check that what I have written is accurate. At any time you can ask me to turn the voice recorder off. I will also write some things down and you will be able to see this too.

Do you have to take part?

It is up to you whether you would like to be involved.

If you choose to be involved and then change your mind you can stop working with me, that is fine. Also, if I ask any questions during our meeting that you do not want to answer then just tell me and I will ask something different.

If anything upsets you about the project then you can let me know and I will try to support you. If I can't support you then we will speak to a member of staff at school.

The Head Teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) of your school have been informed that you might take part in this project. Your parent(s) will also know. Apart from those people you tell, no one else will know you are involved.

What will happen with the things you say?

I will write about some of the things you tell me in my project report. I will not write your real name or the name of your school, so nobody will know it was you who said the words.

If you tell me anything which makes me think that either you or someone else is not safe then I will have to tell a member of staff at your school.

After the project, I will send you a letter explaining what I found out.

What to do next?

If you would like to take part and help me with this project then please fill in the consent form and ask your parent to email it to me.

You can ask me any questions when we are working together or you can ask your parent to email me.

Hopefully, with your help, we can find out some information about what things helped you move to secondary school. We can then use this information to help other adopted children move to secondary school in the future.

Thank you!

Abi

Consent to be Involved in a Research Project

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

Name of researcher: Abigail Fayers

Please read the following statements and circle **yes** or **no**. Please also write your name and the date at the bottom.

1. I confirm I have read and understood the information sheet for the project.	Yes	No
2. I would like to take part in the project.	Yes	No
3. I understand and agree that my interview can be voice recorded.	Yes	No
4. I understand that I can stop being involved at any time without having to give a reason and this is ok. I understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I do not want to.	Yes	No
5. I understand that no one will know exactly what I say because my name or the name of my school will not appear in the report.	Yes	No
6. I understand that if I say anything that makes the researcher think that I or someone else is at risk of harm then the researcher will have to tell a member of staff in the school.	Yes	No
7. I understand I can contact the researcher by speaking to my parent or the Head Teacher or SENCo at school.	Yes	No

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 12a: Year 7 parent information sheet



PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Understanding your Child's School Experiences

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like for your child to take part it is important that you understand what this will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

My name is Abi Fayers and I am currently moving in the third year of a 3 year Doctorate Level Course to become an Educational Psychologist. I am undertaking this training at the University of East London (UEL) and as part of this, I am also completing a professional placement in XXXX Educational Psychology Service.

As part of this Doctoral Level training, I am undertaking a piece of research exploring the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. The research aims to gather the views of adopted children currently in Year 7 or 8 and their parents.

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

What is the purpose of this research?

Research shows that adopted children often experience significantly high rates of exclusion from mainstream schools with a peak in this number of exclusions occurring in the first three years of secondary school. This high number of exclusions in Year 7-9 suggests the need for greater transition support for adopted children during and following the move to secondary school. It is hoped that the recent legislation changes which reflect greater awareness of the needs of adopted children

will contribute to educational improvements and increased inclusion of this group of children. This study aims to explore the factors which contribute to a successful transition to secondary school from the perspective of the adopted children themselves.

The information gained from this study will help to explore what adopted children believe supported their transition to secondary school and what the secondary school have done to support their subsequent inclusion. It is hoped that this will then inform future practice when working with additional adopted children who are undergoing secondary transition.

Why has my child been asked to participate?

Your child has been invited to partake in the research because they are adopted and have recently experienced the transition to secondary school. Permission to invite participants to take part in the research will be sought and agreed with the Head Teacher of your child's school, prior to meeting with your child.

What does participation involve?

If both yourself and your child agree to be involved, your child will be invited to a one-off meeting with me in which I will explore his/her experience of transition to their secondary school and the factors which they feel supported this process. This meeting will be like an informal conversation and may involve some discussion and some drawing.

The meeting will take place at your child's school between October and December 2019 and will be arranged at a time so that your child will not miss any significant learning. The meeting should take no longer than 1 hour. I will make sure that your child is happy to speak with me about his/her experiences and a member of school staff will also be available at all times to support with safety on the school premises as well as providing emotional support should your child become upset etc. I would like to audio record the meeting to enable me to accurately capture your child's views. These audio recordings will then be transcribed for the purpose of the research; however, no individual names or schools will be recorded. The only people who will hear the tapes or see the written transcripts will be myself and my research supervisor. Your child's views will not be recorded alongside their personal details.

I will not be able to pay your child for being involved in my research but their involvement would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. They will receive a thank your letter for their participation.

Does my child have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not to give permission for your child to be involved in this study and should not feel coerced. Should you give permission for your child to take part and then either yourself or your child change your mind, you will have the right to withdraw your child from the research study without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. This withdrawal will involve you being able to decide to not continue with your child's participation in the research and the right to have any data and personal details you have supplied destroyed. You will have a 3-week window from the time your child participates in the one-off meeting to when you can withdraw their data. Following this window, I would reserve the right to use material that you provide. This will not affect access to services or school support for either yourself or your child. Both you and your child will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and they will be treated with respect.

During the meeting, your child does not have to answer all the questions or participate in all stages of the discussion and can stop their participation at any time.

What are the benefits for my child?

The responses provided by your child will help to identify what adopted children feel supported their transition to secondary school. These responses will also help to identify any changes that may be beneficial to other adopted students who also experience secondary transition in the future. In this way, it is hoped that by including the personal experiences of your child, it will be possible to develop a greater understanding of what factors support a successful transition to secondary school for adopted children.

Will anyone know that my child is involved in this research?

The Head Teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) of your child's school are being informed of all the details of the research in order for me to meet with children on the school premises. It is essential that the school are aware of your child's adoptive status.

This research is being undertaken independent to the XXXX Post Adoption Service. They have not requested this research to take place and are not involved in any aspects of the research. They are aware that the research is being undertaken; however, no member of the Adoption Team will be informed of the participation of yourself or your child. Access to services for both you and your child will not be impacted as a result of participation in this research.

Will information collected be confidential?

The privacy and safety of both yourself and your child will be respected at all times. The meetings will be audio recorded and transcribed; however, no names, schools or other identifying details will be included in this written transcript or the write-up of the research. Pseudonyms will be used for your child's name throughout the research, in the audio transcription and in the final write-up. No school names will be recorded in the transcripts or final write-up. Quotes from the children may be included in the final write-up; however, no personal identifiers will be included.

If any information is shared that means I feel that either your child or another individual is at risk of harm or in danger, then I am required to share this with a member of school staff.

What will happen to the information that you provide?

Current Data Protection / GDPR legislation will be adhered to at all times. All personal details and consent forms collected for yourself and your child will be stored on a password protected removable drive and only I will have access to this information. This information will only be stored for the purposes of confirming a date and time for the meetings and the information provided by your child during the course of the research will not be recorded alongside their personal details. No names or schools will be utilised in the transcribed data. My anonymised data will be seen by my research supervisor, and other university-based professionals involved in my examination. A detailed account of the research will also be produced in the form of a Doctoral Thesis for the University of East London. I will also write to you and your child to explain the findings and outcomes of the research.

Following completion of the research and my professional qualification, all personal contact details for yourself and your child will be destroyed. Transcripts will be included in the doctoral thesis which will be available via the British Library.

DBS Check

I have had an Enhanced Criminal Record Check and received a Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service dated July 2017.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns after reading this information sheet, then please do not hesitate to contact me at Abigail.Fayers@XXXX.gov.uk or u1724877@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you feel that your child may like to be involved in this research then please complete the attached consent form and return to Abigail.Fayers@XXXX.gov.uk

Abigail Fayers
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 12b: Year 7 parent consent form



Pioneering Futures Since 1898

Parental Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

Name of researcher: Abigail Fayers

Please read the following statements and put a circle round your answers.

1. I confirm I have read and understood the information sheet for the study and been given a copy to keep. The nature, purposes and procedures of the research have been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information.	Yes	No
2. I am happy for my child (name).....to take part in the study.	Yes	No
3. I understand that the participation is voluntary and I am able to withdraw my child from the study up to 3-weeks following their participation without giving a reason and without affecting access to services. I understand that it will not be possible for the researcher to remove responses from the written report after this 3-week window has expired.	Yes	No
4. I confirm that both my child and the child's school are aware of the adoptive status.	Yes	No
5. I understand that personal details will remain strictly confidential and only the researcher and research supervisor will have access to this information. I understand that any data collected will be included in an anonymised form in a doctoral thesis.	Yes	No
6. I give permission for a digital voice recorded to be used during the interview with my child.	Yes	No
7. I understand the limits of confidentiality such that if my child mentions something that suggests that either they or someone else is at risk of harm then this information will have to be reported to a member of school staff.	Yes	No
8. I understand I can contact the researcher or the research supervisor using the email addresses provided.	Yes	No

Name of Child:

Child's School:

Your Name:

Relationship to Child:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 13a: Parent participant information sheet



Pioneering Futures Since 1898

PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Understanding your Child's School Experiences

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who is the researcher?

My name is Abi Fayers and I am currently in the third year of a 3 year Doctorate Level Course to become an Educational Psychologist. I am undertaking this training at the University of East London (UEL) and as part of this, I am also completing a professional placement in XXXX Educational Psychology Service.

As part of this Doctoral Level training, I am undertaking a piece of research exploring the factors which support the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. The research aims to gather the views of adopted children currently in Year 7 or 8 and their parents.

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

What is the purpose of this research?

Research shows that adopted children often experience significantly high rates of exclusion from mainstream schools with a peak in this number of exclusions occurring in the first three years of secondary school. This high number of exclusions in Year 7-9 suggests the need for greater transition support for adopted children during and following the move to secondary school. It is hoped that the recent legislation changes which reflect greater awareness of the needs of adopted children will contribute to educational improvements and increased inclusion of this group of

children. This study aims to explore the factors which contribute to a successful transition to secondary school from the perspective of the adopted children themselves.

The information gained from this study will help to explore what adopted children believe supported their transition to secondary school and what the secondary school have done to support their subsequent inclusion. It is hoped that this will then inform future practice when working with additional adopted children who are undergoing secondary transition.

Why have you been asked to participate?

You have been invited to participate in my research as I am looking to involve parents who adopted a child and have recently supported their child through the transition to mainstream secondary school. Your child will currently be at secondary school.

I emphasise that I am not looking for 'experts' on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

What will participation involve?

If you agree to participate you will be asked to take part in an individual interview. This interview will be like having an informal discussion about how both you and your child experienced the transition to secondary school and what factors supported this school move. We will also discuss the roles of both the primary and the secondary school in this transition and what was done to ensure the move was as successful as possible. This may also involve exploring what measures / interventions / support the secondary school have put in place to ensure the subsequent inclusion of your child as well as how you and your child are currently finding the secondary school experience. The interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed.

The interview should take approximately 1 hour and will take place at a local XXXX County Council office building at a date and time most convenient for you. It is hoped that this interview will take place between October and December 2019.

I will not be able to pay you for participating in my research but your participation would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of the research area and potentially inform future practice.

What if you want to withdraw?

Participation is voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not to participate in this study and should not feel coerced. Should you choose to participate and then change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. This withdrawal will involve you being able to decide

to not continue with your participation in the research and the right to have any data and personal details you have supplied destroyed. You will have a 3-week window from the time you participate in the interview to when you can withdraw your data. Following this window, I would reserve the right to use material that you provide. This will not affect access to services or school support for either yourself or your child.

Your taking part will be safe and confidential

Your privacy and safety will be respected at all times. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed; however, no names, schools or other identifying details will be included in this written transcript or the write-up of the research. You do not have to answer all the questions or participate in all stages of the discussion and can stop your participation at any time.

What will happen to the information that you provide?

Any personal data will be stored in line with current Data Protection / GDPR regulations. All personal details collected will be stored on a password protected removable drive and only I will have access to this information. This information will only be stored for the purposes of confirming a date and time for the meetings and any contributions you make during the interview will not be recorded alongside your personal details. No names or schools will be utilised in the transcribed data. My anonymised data will be seen by my research supervisor, and other university-based professionals involved in my examination. A detailed account of the research will also be produced in the form of a Doctoral Thesis for the University of East London. I will also write to you to explain the findings and outcomes of the research.

Following completion of the research and my professional qualification, all personal contact details for yourself and your child will be destroyed. Transcripts will be included in the doctoral thesis which will be available via the British Library.

Will anyone know you are doing this research?

Whilst, the XXXX County Post Adoption Team are aware that the research is being undertaken, it is being conducted independent to their Service. This means that they have not requested this research to take place and are not involved in any aspects of the research. No member of the Adoption Team will be informed of the details of those participants involved. Access to services for both you and your child will not be impacted as a result of participation in this research.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns after reading this information sheet, then please do not hesitate to contact me at Abigail.Fayers@XXXX.gov.uk or u1724877@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you feel that you would like to be involved in this research then please complete the attached consent form and return to Abigail.Fayers@XXXX.gov.uk

Consent to participate in a research study

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

Name of researcher: Abigail Fayers

I have read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher and the research supervisor involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Appendix 14: Head teacher information sheet

Miss A. Fayers

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24th October 2019

Understanding the School Experiences of Adopted Children

Dear

My name is Abi Fayers and I am currently in the final year of a 3 year Doctorate Level Course to become an Educational Psychologist. I am undertaking this training at the University of East London (UEL) and as part of this, I am also completing a professional placement in XXXX Educational Psychology Service.

As part of this Doctoral Level training, I am undertaking a piece of research exploring the factors which support the experience of transition to secondary school for adopted children. This research is being undertaken independent to the XXXX Adoption Service; however, they are aware it is taking place. **I am therefore writing to ask whether you would consider giving permission for adopted students in your school to be involved in the research**, either as research consultants and / or research participants (please read on for further details).

Title of the research: Transition to secondary school: the perspectives of adopted children and their parents: a participatory research study.

My research has been approved by the University of East London's School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

What is the purpose of this research?

Research shows that adopted children experience significantly high rates of exclusion from mainstream schools with a peak in this number of exclusions occurring in the first three years of secondary school. This high number of exclusions in Year 7-9 suggests the need for greater transition support for adopted children during and following the move to secondary school. It is hoped that the recent legislation changes which reflect greater awareness of the needs of adopted children will contribute to educational improvements and increased inclusion of this group of children. This study aims to explore the factors which contribute to a successful

transition to and inclusion in secondary school from the perspective of the adopted children themselves.

The information gained from this study will help to explore what adopted children believe supported their transition to secondary school and what the secondary school have done to support their inclusion. It is hoped that this will then inform future practice when working with additional adopted children who are undergoing secondary transition.

What does the research involve?

The research is participatory in design and so will involve adopted children in the design of the research and in decisions regarding the dissemination of findings.

Stage 1

The first stage of the study will involve Year 9-11 students who have been adopted. On either one or two separate occasions, I will meet with a small group of these individuals (2 students) during which I will provide some short input on research design and data collection methods. The group will then be involved in deciding upon the questions to be addressed by the research and the data collection techniques to be used. These individuals will be the research consultants.

The meeting(s) is/are likely to last no more than 1 hour and will be held in the school at a date and time considered to be least disruptive for the individuals and the school. Parents and students will be informed of these arrangements. These meetings will be conducted during Autumn Term 2019.

I have received signed consent forms from two students from your school who would like to be the research consultants.

Stage 2

Following this co-design of the study, I will collect data from Year 7 and/or 8 students who have been adopted regarding their transition to and subsequent inclusion in secondary school. These individuals will be the participants and will be recruited from across XXXX. The format of this data collection will be chosen by the Year 9-11 research consultants and could involve interviews, drawings or photo elicitation. You will be informed of the specific techniques to be used once they have been decided upon. Individual meetings will be audio recorded and transcribed anonymously so that no personal identifiers are included. The meetings will be conducted individually in the student's school and will last no more than 1 hour. They will be arranged at a date and time that is least disruptive for the school and the individual. It is intended that these individual meetings will take place during the Autumn Term 2019.

I have received one signed consent form from a student in your school who would like to be a research participant.

Stage 3

Following data collection and analysis, the research consultants from stage 1 will be contacted again and a further group session will be held in order to share the findings and seek suggestions regarding their dissemination. It is hoped that this session will be held in November-December 2019.

Informed consent will be obtained from parents prior to each stage of the research. Research-consultants, participants or their parents will have the right to withdraw from the research at any time prior to the research thesis being written without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. There will be no payment for participation in the research but it would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of my research topic. Those students involved will receive a small certificate as recognition of their contribution to the research.

How will confidentiality be ensured?

All decisions made regarding research design with the research consultants will be made as a group and thus no individual names will be identified. All data gathered during the individual meetings with Year 7/8 students will be anonymised. Participants will be allocated a pseudonym so that they are not identifiable. No names of the schools, area or Local Authority will be used. All information collected, consent forms and audio recordings taken during the meetings with Year 7/8s will be stored securely in a password protected file in line with current GDPR legislation. Only my research supervisor and I will be able to access the anonymised data. Current Data Protection legislation will be adhered to at all times. Any personal details of research consultants, participants and their parents and audio recordings will be destroyed after the study has been completed. Electronic transcripts of the meetings with Year 7/8 students will be retained by the researcher for 2 years following completion of the research and then destroyed. Copies of these transcripts will be made available to respective participants only.

Participants will be made aware of the confidentiality of the research; however, it will also be made clear than any disclosures which result in concerns regarding the safety of an individual will need to be reported to an appropriate member of school staff. The schools safeguarding policy would therefore be adhered to.

Whilst I am working with either Year 9-11 research consultants or Year 7/8 participants, I request that a member of school staff with pastoral responsibility be on site and available at all times should any child require a familiar adult to speak to. Children will be signposted to the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator should they need any further support following my involvement.

DBS Check

I have had an Enhanced Criminal Record Check and received a Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service dated July 2017.

Further information

If you require further information on the study or have any questions or concerns after reading this information sheet then please do not hesitate to contact me or my research supervisor at Abigail.Fayers@XXXX.gov.uk / u1724877@uel.ac.uk or M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Mary Robinson, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: M.Robinson@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. It would be of great help if you could let me know by email whether you give permission for the research to take place in your school as soon as possible and before 1st November 2019 as there are three students who have provided consent to be involved in the research.

Kind regards

Abigail Fayers
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 15: Plan for session with research consultants

1. Introductions

- Who you are & role of EP
- Reasons for research & reasons for asking group to help
- What we will do today and timings (group name)
- Reminders re no names used, safeguarding, notes and right to withdraw
- Check happy to continue
- Warm-up activities (problem-free talk re the week; PCP technique – how would others describe them)

2. What is research?

- As the group what they think 'research' is. Ask them to write their thoughts on sticky notes and display them up on the board.
- Definition: seek to find out about something that no one knows much about by collecting data & it seeks to make a difference by generating new knowledge. It goes beyond looking in a book or on the internet:
 - Can you find all the information that you would like to know in books or on the internet?
 - Can you think of a question that no one yet knows the answer to (something you cannot find on the internet or in a book)?
 - Can you think of a question about which some people have suggested answers but not all people agree on them?
- Ask the group whether they have ever done any research before (research is all around us)
- Difference between social research vs natural science research (about thoughts, feelings, behaviours and experiences of people vs. the physical world and nature) – collect qualitative data (descriptions)
- Research needs to be ethical – what does this mean? – respect, does not cause harm, right to be fully informed, give consent and be listened to, promote best outcomes, withdrawal, deception, anonymity and confidentiality
- Show sheet with stages of the social research process and go through each stage with the group (ask whether they have any ideas – use example of “what do the people in my class watch on TV and why?” to explain words).

3. The research topic and research questions

- Explain that you have thought of the topic but that you want their help to 'make a plan'.
- Explain the research topic and reasons for
- State the need to have a question to investigate (research question)
- State the research question and ask whether there is anything else the group would like to find out about related to the research topic (funnel it down)

4. Data collection methods

- Target population vs research participants sample
- Generate ways in which we can collect data
- Talk about two options – interviews and photograph / drawing collages and they can choose what they think is best
- Interviews:
 - Used a lot to gather qualitative data (beliefs, experiences)
 - Ask what interviews may involve and what the advantages and disadvantages
 - Explain there are three types of interview – matching activity (name & definition)
 - Discuss a structured interview
 - Ask how an unstructured interview might be different and advantages & disadvantages [allow for individual responses and more flexible]
 - Use activity sheet 5.1 – ask how a semi-structured interview might be different
 - Activity sheet 5.2 / example transcripts – look for open, closed, follow-up, leading and key questions (O, C, F, L, K)
- Visual Materials
 - Ask the children how they might be able to use 'visual materials' such as drawings or interview photographs or cuttings from magazines in collecting data
 - Such materials may help to understand what a participant thinks or feels better

- Jenny scenario - ask children how she could use visual materials to collect data
- Can use visual materials alongside interviews – prompt answers or support understanding – can they think of examples
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages of using visual materials
- Ask for the children's thoughts on data collection methods – design some questions and use example prompts & checklist 5.1 – practise on one another; adult asks questions to explore thoughts of interviewee and interviewer

5. Next Steps

- Explain the research plan (data collection)
- Explain you will do the data analysis (discuss meaning of analyse – examining data closely to see whether it contains evidence about the research question) and what this will identify
- The researcher will examine the words, phrases or sentences and decide whether they mean anything in relation to the research question.
- Remind research consultants that you will meet them again after Christmas – you will share the findings with them and ask them who they would like the information to be shared with (teachers, parents, virtual school etc.) and how we can present that information (dissemination)

6. Debrief

- Thanks - provide the debrief letter and certificate for their help
- Gather evaluation information on the session

Appendix 16: Initial interview questions generated by research consultants

Questions for Young People

- 1) What was it like moving from your primary school to your secondary school?
- 2) What was it like meeting new people from different schools? Were there people who you got on with?
- 3) Did you want to stay at primary school or move to secondary school?
- 4) How did you feel moving school?
- 5) How was your transition from a different school?
- 6) Has it been easy or hard being more independent in secondary school?
- 7) How do you feel about the new environment?
- 8) What, if anything, would make you feel more included in this school?
- 9) What helped you? What didn't help?

Questions for Parents

- 1) How did you feel when your child moved to secondary school?
- 2) How did your child feel when they started secondary?
- 3) Who helped your child move to secondary?
- 4) What did they do? Was it helpful or not helpful?
- 5) Did you want your child to go to secondary?
- 6) Did you have any concerns about your child going to secondary?
- 7) Do you think your child is included at secondary school?
- 8) Do you think your child has managed to make different friends?

Appendix 17: Year 7 participant interview schedule

Starting:

- Introduce self to interviewee. Thank them for coming to speak with you today and for agreeing to take part in your study.
- Explain what the interview is for ("It can be really difficult to start secondary school and I am interested in finding out what it was like to start secondary school from the perspective of adopted young people in Year 7 and this chat today will help me to find out about it")
- Explain that you will record the interview using a voice recorder so that you don't have to write everything down now and I can listen to it again.
- Explain that the recording will be stored safe so only you have access to it. You will type the interview up but will not use interviewee's real name or the name of the school or any teacher's real names. So it is all anonymous and nobody will know what you have said.
- Explain that if there is any question that they do not want to answer, they can just say so and we will move on. If they do not wish to continue at any point then they can just leave without telling you why.
- Explain that if they say anything which makes me think that they or someone else is in danger then you will have to tell a member of staff in the school.
- Ask whether they are happy to carry on and if they have any questions for you.

Overview of Interview Process:

- I am interested in your experience of starting secondary school and any support you were given
- Explain that there are no right or wrong answers – interviewee will probably do most of the talking but can say as much as would like to
- Remind the interviewee that they can take their time with thinking about what to say and speaking, there is no rush

Questions:

The interviewee will be given the opportunity to draw a picture of them on their first day of secondary school; this will be used to prompt their thinking about secondary school and will act as a visual tool to facilitate discussion.

1. Can you tell me about what it was like to start secondary school (experience)? (prompts – can you tell me about your first day, actions, feelings, best part, challenges)
2. How did you feel about moving from primary school to secondary school? (prompts – thoughts about secondary and what it would be like, views on staying / moving)

3. What was different about secondary school compared to primary school? (prompts – consider new people, bigger environment, increased independence)
4. How did you find those changes? (prompts – feelings, managing change)
5. How has your first term of secondary school been? (prompts – how is this school now / good things / enjoy / not so good / tricky things / who to do to for help)
6. Can you tell me about any help you had from your primary school to prepare for secondary school? (prompts – who did what, what was it like, was it helpful / not helpful and why, how did it help, did you have information about your secondary school, anything that could have been better)
7. Can you tell me about any help you had from your secondary school to settle in, get used to the new buildings and make friends? (prompts – who did what, what was it like / was it helpful / not helpful and why, how did it help)
8. What do you think about other people knowing that someone is adopted? How would it be helpful / not helpful? (prompts – staff and peers)
9. Did anyone else help you settle in and what did they do? (prompts – parents, siblings, peers)
10. Was there anything else your secondary school could have done to help you settle in better? (prompts – why would that have helped)
11. If you could talk to other adopted young people about starting secondary school, what advice would you give them?
12. Can you summarise your experience of starting secondary school in one sentence?
13. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about starting secondary school?

Ending:

- Ask whether they have any questions about our chat today / research generally
- Explain what will happen next (including writing a letter to tell them the findings)
- Remind them of their right to withdraw and confidentiality
- Hand over the debrief letter and go through.
- Thank the interviewee for speaking with you today.

Additional Prompts

- What was that like?
- How did that make you feel?
- What do you mean by...?
- Was that important for you?
- Can you tell me more?
- What was it about that you liked/disliked?

Appendix 18: Parent participant interview schedule

Starting / Overview:

- Introduce self to interviewee. Thank them for coming to speak with you today and for agreeing to take part in your study.
- Explain purpose of the interview and timings
- Explain that you will record the interview using a voice recorder and why.
- Explain that the recording will be stored safe so only you have access to it. You will type the interview up but will not use interviewee's real name or the name of the school or any teacher's real names (anonymous).
- Explain that if there is any question that they do not want to answer, they can just say so and we will move on. If they do not wish to continue at any point then they can just leave without telling you why.
- Ask whether they are happy to carry on and if they have any questions for you.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your child's experience starting secondary school? (prompts- prior to moving, the first day from morning to night, the first term)
2. How was your child when they started at secondary school? How did he / she experience the changes? (prompts – feelings)
3. How did you feel when your child started at secondary school? (prompts – likes / dislikes / concerns)
4. Who was involved in supporting your child to move to secondary school? What did they do? Was it helpful / unhelpful and why? How did it help? (prompts – primary, secondary, professionals, family, peers)
5. Was there anything else the secondary school could have done to help your child settle in better? Why would that have helped?
6. Is there any other support that you feel would have been supportive to you and your child? (prompts – what is it about that which is important)

7. How is your child finding secondary school now and are they are included?
(prompts – making new friends, new teachers, bigger environment, increased independence)
8. What do you think about other people (peers /staff) knowing that someone is adopted? How would it be helpful / not helpful?
9. Can you summarise the experience of both you and your child when they started at secondary school?
10. Is there anything else you would like to tell about the experience of your child starting secondary school?

Ending:

- Ask whether they have any questions about our chat today / research generally
- Explain what will happen next (including writing a letter to tell them the findings)
- Remind them of their right to withdraw and confidentiality
- Hand over the debrief letter and go through.
- Thank the interviewee for speaking with you today.

Additional Prompts

- What was that like?
- How did that make you feel?
- What do you mean by...?
- Was that important for you?
- Can you tell me more?
- What was it about that you liked/disliked?

Appendix 19: Debrief information provided to research consultants

Abi Fayers
Trainee Educational Psychologist

22nd November 2019

Dear

A big thank you!

I wanted to write a letter to you to say thank you for meeting with me and helping me to design this research. You have been very friendly, open and polite when speaking with me and I have enjoyed getting to know you in the short time we have worked together.

You have been fantastic at helping me plan how to do this research. I noticed that you both had some brilliant ideas about how we could find out about the experience of moving to secondary school for other adopted children and about the questions we could ask.

I will now use the ideas that you shared and the decisions we made together to finalise my plan for this research. I will then speak to a few Year 7 adopted children and their parents about their experiences when moving to secondary school. Once I have done this and I have got some information, I will contact you again to let you know and ask you whether you have any ideas about what we could do with these findings. Hopefully all the information I find out will help me to know what helps adopted children have a positive experience when they move to secondary school.

If, after I leave, you feel upset or want someone to speak to, then please go and speak to XXXX and they will listen to you and try to help.

I have included a small certificate below to say thank you for all your fantastic contributions – well done!

Thank you

Abi

Certificate of Achievement



This is awarded to



.....

For taking part in the session and helping to design this
research.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 20: Debrief information provided to Year 7 participants

A big thank you!

Thank you for being involved in my research and for sharing your ideas and experiences about your move to secondary school. It has been really interesting to hear what you had to say and I have enjoyed spending time with you.

This letter is just to remind you what will happen with all the information you have given me today. I will type up our conversation; however, I will not include your real name so no one will know it was you. I will then use all the information you have provided to find out what helps adopted children have a positive experience when they move to secondary school.

If, after I leave, you feel upset or want someone to speak to, then please go and speak to XXXXX (school SENCo) and they will listen to you and try to help.

Also, if you change your mind and no longer want to be involved in this research then you have three weeks from today to let me know and I will get rid of all your details and the information you told me today. Please tell your parent if this is the case.

Thank you.

Abi

Appendix 21: Debrief information provided to parent participants

PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Understanding your Child's School Experiences

Thank you for taking part in the interview today. The information you have provided will be useful in exploring the experience of starting secondary school and what factors support a successful transition for adopted children and their families.

As outlined in the participant information sheet, the interview today has been audio recorded and will now be transcribed. Any personal identifiable details, including names, will not be included in the written transcript. The data will then be analysed to explore the lived experience of starting secondary school as an adoptive family. Following conclusion of the research and successful completion of the Doctoral Thesis, all personal details will be destroyed. The anonymised written transcript may be included in the Thesis and you are able to request a copy of this should you wish.

If you change your mind and no longer wish to be involved in this research then you are free to withdraw without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. You have a 3-week window from today when you can withdraw your data. Following this window, I would reserve the right to use the material that you provide. Withdrawal will not affect access to services for either yourself or your child.

The XXXX Post Adoption Team are not aware that you have participated in this research; however, if the discussion today has raised any issues or you feel you would benefit from further support then please contact the Post Adoption Team at post.adoption@XXXX.gov.uk.

In addition, the following websites have been set up by Adoption Charities and contain useful information, advice and support:

- <https://www.adoptionuk.org/>
- <https://www.adoptionmatters.org/>
- <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/fosteringandadoption/adoption.htm>

Thank you

Abi Fayers

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 22: An example of the data analysis process for one participant

Stage 1: Reading and re-reading:

An example of the recollections from the interview and initial impressions recorded by the researcher after listening to and reading Violet's transcript (Year 7):

'Violet was reluctant to speak during the interview and appeared anxious around the researcher. Relationships seem to be very important to her and she appears to have a need to have friends and be popular, with a big reliance on her friends as a source of support. She does however realise that there can be some challenges in friendships such as bullying. Violet seems to be finding it difficult to understand why some of her peers do not understand adoption and whilst she would like them to know why children can be adopted, she does not appear to want to share her adopted status as she is unsure how others may respond to her. The loss of her family cat soon after she started at secondary school was a big moment for her and she seems to have found the reactions of both peers and teachers unsupportive'.

Step 2: Initial noting & Step 3: Developing emergent themes:

Examples of initial noting on Violet's transcript (right hand margin). As examples, 'leaving friends' is a descriptive comment (blue); 'repetition – stress difficulty leaving' is a linguistic comment (red); and 'sense of change and loss is difficult' is a conceptual comment (black).

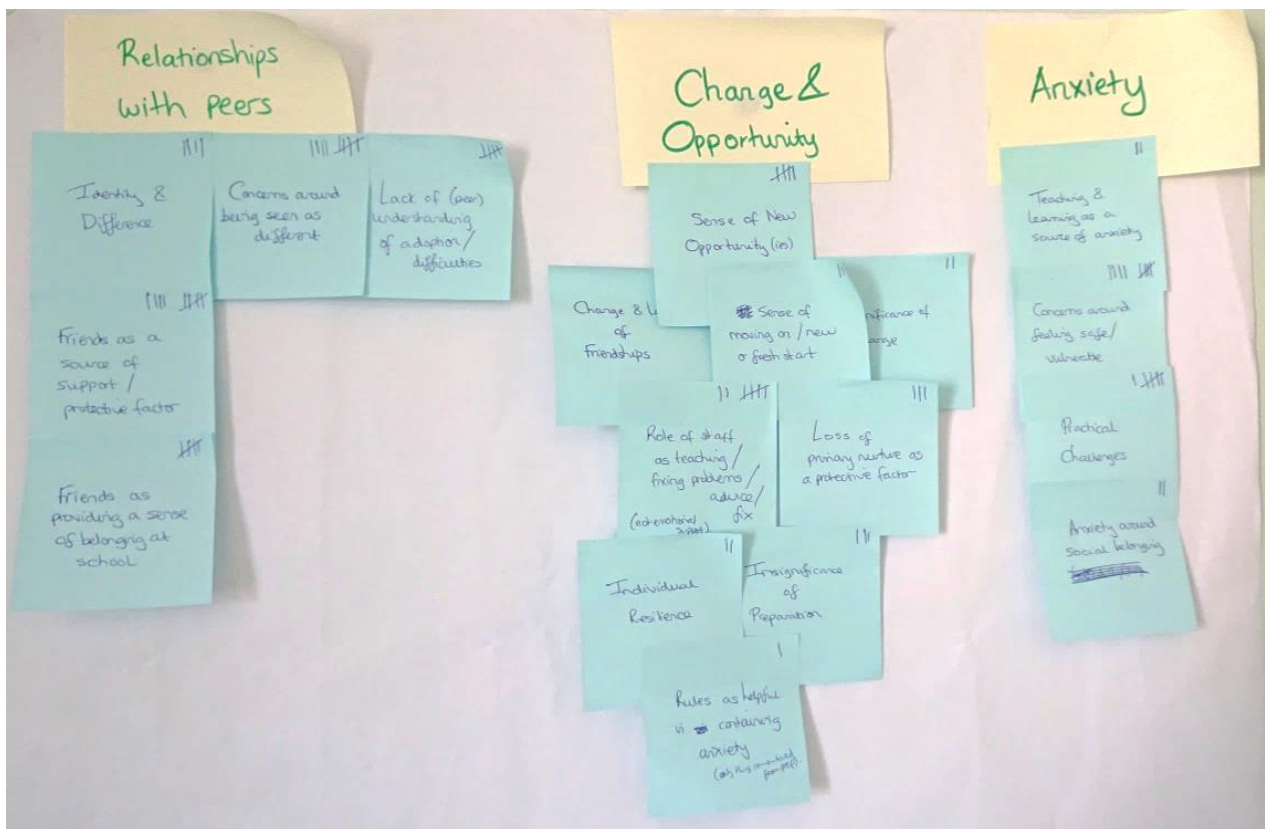
Examples of emergent themes on Violet's transcript (left hand margin). Examples include 'Change & loss of friendships' and 'Individual resilience'.

Emergent Themes	Line	Transcript	Comments
change + loss of friendships	1	Interviewer (I): Okay, so my first question is, can you tell me what it was like to start secondary school?	
	2		
	3	Participant (P): It was a bit stressful because like you don't want leave your friends	leaving friends sad - sense of loss
	4	when you go, so like on your last day it's very sad 'cos you all like crying and stuff	centrality of friendships to school xp.
	5	but when you get there, there's like loads of new people and it's nice to have new	new people - dealing with change
	6	people in your life but it's still very hard.	hard b/c you have to make friendships again - like hard work?
	7	I: In what way is it hard?	
	8	P: Like you have to leave them, but you may still have their number or something	leaving friends hard
	9	but like you just don't want to leave them.	repetition - stress difficulty leaving
	10	I: So it's changing, it's changing the people that you're with?	change + loss is difficult
	11	P: Yeah.	
	12	I: How did you manage being around new people?	
	13	P: It was alright, I, I did miss my old friends a lot. But it got easier.	miss old friends ; get easier
	14	I: Okay, in what way did it get easier?	loss, sense of emptiness, belonging has gone too?

98	P: Making new friends and like, I have to get the bus home, so like on the way	new friends - sense of new opportunities
99	back there's loads of people getting on and you're like 'oo who are these new	friends on bus - friends as a measure of inclusion + success?
100	people?' and then I've made friends on the bus as well so like people who get on	need for relationships / anxiety of being alone?
101	every day that you can sit with and chat with. It's quite nice. Yeah the first time I	bus originally scary - surprised that it was actually okay
102	did it, it was like really scary, but then I got on and I was like 'oh it's fine'.	firm base in 'friends' - certainty.
103	I: What made it easier? What made it less scary?	friends - bring you a sense of belonging. a sense of fear of being on own?
104	P: Friends. 'Cos like people you can talk to instead of just standing there like 'err'.	
105	I: Did you have to get the bus when you were in primary school?	
106	P: No.	
107	I: What was that like then, having to get the bus and having to get yourself home	
108	without getting picked up?	
109	P: It was nerve-wracking but like you get used to it, yeah, it's quite easy to get	bus - nerve wracking initially but get used to it. - sense of individual resilience.
110	used to 'cos like you do it every day so yeah.	
111	I: So the best part has been the friendships and it sounds like to me that you have	
112	a good friendship group. Has there been anything that's been really challenging at	
113	secondary school?	teaching + learning as challenging. change from primary - need for adjustment. Practical challenges / expectations of focusing on one lesson for longer.
114	P: Like different classes because they, think they go on for longer 'cos I only get	
115	three lessons in one day but they go on for a very long time and some of the	
116	questions and answers and stuff are really like tricky and some of them are really	
117	easy.	

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

The emergent themes for Violet which have been placed in groups and labelled with superordinate themes. For example, one group of subordinate themes for Violet was labelled as 'Anxiety'.



Appendix 23: Example transcript and analysis – Year 7 participant

- descriptive comments
- linguistic comments
- interpretative comments

Transcript: Year 7 Participant – Violet

Information regarding the purpose of the interview, the use of the voice recorder, data security, confidentiality, anonymity, the interview process and safeguarding was provided prior to the interview commencing. The participant was then provided with the opportunity to ask questions. The interviewer confirmed whether the participant was happy to carry on.

Emergent Themes	Line	Transcript	Comments
change + loss of friendships	1	Interviewer (I): Okay, so my first question is, can you tell me what it was like to	
	2	start secondary school?	
	3	Participant (P): It was a bit stressful because like you don't want leave your friends	leaving friends sad - sense of loss
	4	when you go, so like on your last day it's very sad 'cos you all like crying and stuff	centrality of friendships to school xp.
	5	but when you get there, there's like loads of new people and it's nice to have new	new people - dealing with change
	6	people in your life but it's still very hard.	hard b/c you have to make friendships again - like hard work?
	7	I: In what way is it hard?	
	8	P: Like you have to leave them, but you may still have their number or something	leaving friends hard
	9	but like you just don't want to leave them.	repetition - stress difficulty leaving
	10	I: So it's changing, it's changing the people that you're with?	sense of change + loss is difficult
	11	P: Yeah.	
	12	I: How did you manage being around new people?	
	13	P: It was alright, I, I did miss my old friends a lot. But it got easier.	miss old friends ; get easier
	14	I: Okay, in what way did it get easier?	loss, sense of emptiness, belonging has gone tho?

<p>developing new friendships sense of moving on/new fresh start</p>	<p>15 16 17</p>	<p>P: Like you meet new people and they become like really kind. Sounds a bit mean but you kinda forget about your other friends, it's sad but like, you forget but they're still there.</p>	<p>meet new people, new friendships forget about old friends almost like change + moving on is inevitable</p>
	<p>18</p>	<p>I: They're still there, they're still there in the school or in a different school?</p>	
	<p>19 20</p>	<p>P: In a different school like, they've got other friends, they've got other friends, you've got other friends. It's a whole new lot of people.</p>	<p>new friends - moving on for everyone - chance to build new identity & friendships?</p>
<p>concerns re feeling safe/ vulnerability</p>	<p>21 22</p>	<p>I: How does it feel when you have to be put into a school that's bigger when there's so many more people around you?</p>	<p>pushed by older kids - concerns re safety which weren't there in primary?</p>
<p>sense of change concerns re feeling safe/ vulnerable</p>	<p>23 24</p>	<p>P: You get pushed a lot, in the corridors. Like physically pushed, because of all like the big Year 11s and stuff, they're like towering over you like 'aahh'.</p>	<p>smaller than other pupils - sense of things have changed. Concerns re safety & vulnerability b/c of older pupils - view self as vulnerable - strong? just emphasises feeling of being small hard to explain - question whether right?</p>
	<p>25</p>	<p>I: How does it feel to be the smallest one?</p>	<p>not remember first day - it was</p>
	<p>26</p>	<p>P: Weird.</p>	
	<p>27</p>	<p>I: What does that mean?</p>	
	<p>28 29 30 31</p>	<p>P: 'Cos like when you first start school, you're the littlest and that's like, bout 7 years ago isn't it? And then you move on to this school and then you're suddenly the smallest again and you're like 'oh no' 'cos like you're just so small, it's really hard to explain, you're just like not very, like strong or something?</p>	
	<p>32 33</p>	<p>I: So you're the smallest and everybody is much much bigger and older isn't it. So, can you remember your very very first day at secondary school?</p>	
	<p>34</p>	<p>P: Sort of, I can remember my first day at primary which is really weird but I can't</p>	

friendships as central to XP/protective factor	35	remember my first day at secondary school because I've met so many new friends	almost like a non event, <i>happy tone</i>
	36	that it's all like gone 'woosh' all out my mind.	new friends - this has become central, all success depends on number of friends & relationship quality.
	37	I: In what way, can you remember anything?	
friends as source of support/a protective factor	38	P: Yeah, I can remember walking in with my friend [name]. Um, and we walked in	walking in with friend - source of support, centrality of friends
practical challenges	39	and we were like 'oh my, it's so big' 'cos like we've got a massive entrance and	new environment bigger - change & practical challenge
friends as providing a sense of belonging at school	40	you, and there's like stairs in the middle of it and you go up. But it's like so big and	
	41	we're like 'oh no where's all our friends?' because we did have some friends from	sense of feeling lost + overwhelmed & vulnerable when no friends around.
	42	like our school 'cos she moved to a different school then she came to our school.	finding friends
	43	So, yeah there was like no one, it was so big that we couldn't find anyone. But like	only Year 7s were there first - helped to build a sense of safety - lucky.
	44	we found people at break and stuff and then we were lucky because they didn't	
	45	come in, the Year 7s were the only ones in and then the Year 8s and the Year 9s	
	46	gradually came in and then all the bigger kids came in.	
	47	I: So you had some time there without anybody else. Was that helpful?	
concerns re safety/vulnerability	48	P: Yeah 'cos like you don't get pushed a lot and bumped over 'cos some of my	pushed by older pupils - safety concerns
friends as source of support/a protective factor	49	friends have fallen over in the corridors. Err, yeah it was nice because you get to	<i>happy tone</i> .
	50	know people and then if someone shouts at you, they like help you, like if you	friends stick up for you - peer relationships
	51	stick up for yourself, it's really nice.	as support - almost essential & reassuring. - build a sense of belonging
	52	I: So it was nice to have a bit of space without...	
friends as providing a sense of belonging at school	53	P: ...yeah nice free time.	free time - relaxed start - help to reduce worries?
	54	I: Yeah. You've told me that you're finding it quite difficult to remember that first	
	55	day, but can you remember what you were thinking maybe in the summer holiday	
	56	just before you gonna start there?	

anxiety re social
belonging

change & loss of friendships	57	P: I was like, 'I don't wanna go anymore, I want to go back to my old school and	less of old friends; making new friends
	58	see all of my friends' and I was like 'well that's not gonna happen, I'm gonna have	having to deal with change + loss
	59	to make lovely new friends', and I have!	does she feel vulnerable if no friends around her?
	60	I: Good, so you were thinking that you wanted to go back to primary school. How	
	61	were you feeling at that time?	
sense of opportunity	62	P: I was feeling very nervous but I was excited because I knew I was going to meet	mix of emotions
	63	a whole new load of bunch of people.	sense of opportunity around new friends
	64	I: Okay, so what was it that was making you feel nervous?	
concerns re safety / vulnerability	65	P: All the bigger kids being intimidating I guess, they're gonna be and you're	bigger kids - concerns re safety.
	66	gonna find someone who's not nice in every school but like there's gonna be a	her reasoning is a source of resilience
	67	whole other bunch of people who are lovely.	for her - friends - relationships are important
	68	I: And have there been lots of lovely people?	
friendship friendships as central to XP.	69	P: Yeah, I have lots and lots of friends.	repetition signals importance of friends.
	70	I: Good, good, and how, what's been the. So that was kind of like when you	
	71	started, so if you think about, you've been there like a whole term now, what's	
	72	the whole term been like?	
significance of change	73	P: <u>Amazing really</u> , 'cos it's, it's weird to think that you just gone up like a massive	use of 'amazing' - is she surprised at how it has been (positive)?
	74	step and then just met loads of new people and like all different classes and some	new people + friends - change
	75	very weird classes. 'Cos like in science you have to like, with like lamb body parts	different classes - new opportunities
	76	and stuff like that. And then in maths, it can get like really tricky and in English it	teaching + learning as a source of anxiety.
teaching + learning as a source of anxiety	77	can get tricky and in most classes.	

↓ massive step - weird? - why is it weird? she never thought she
would manage it b/c it's such a "massive" thing?
have other people made it "a massive ~~the~~ step?" & really
it was a non event?

staff for teaching (role)	78	I: And do you get help when you're in your classes that are, when it gets tricky?	
	79 80	P: Yeah. There's usually a lady or some teacher assistant who's helping the teacher in the classroom and they always come and help you.	help from LSAs (academic); sense of feeling supported when needed.
practical challenges concerns re safety and vulnerability	81 82 83 84	I: Okay, so we kind of talked about how it's primary school and secondary school is different because there's lots more people and some of them are much much bigger. Are there any other ways that you have found that secondary school is different to primary school?	repetition of 'much' ⇒ emphasise change size of school - practical challenges other pupils + shouting - concerns re vulnerability/safety
friends as a source of support / protective factor	85 86	P: Much much much bigger, lots more people around you, lots of shouting on the playground.	
friends as providing sense of belonging at school	87	I: Okay and how have those things been to manage?	make friends - this is her biggest source of support; not self or teachers. - giving her a sense of belonging + identity in school?
	88 89 90	P: They've been alright 'cos like you make friends as I said on the first day then if you go up to like the cafeteria or something they come with you and in most classes they're with you and in like form they're with you.	
	91 92	I: It sounds like you have a good bunch of friends. Do you think, do you think it's been easy to make new friends or has it been quite difficult?	making friends - see this as a strength friends as most important - for support & to create a sense of belonging that feels included.
	93 94	P: I think I'm good at making friends and I've made quite a lot of friends so quite easy.	positivity emphasised by short confirmation
	95	I: Good, it all sounds quite good, sounds like it's been a good term.	
	96	P: It has.	
	97	I: Yeah. What's been the best part of being at secondary school?	

<p>friends as a source of support/protective factor</p> <p>sense of new opportunities</p> <p>need to belong</p>	<p>98</p> <p>99</p> <p>100</p> <p>101</p> <p>102</p> <p>103</p> <p>104</p> <p>105</p> <p>106</p> <p>107</p> <p>108</p>	<p>P: Making new friends and like, I have to get the bus home, so like on the way back there's loads of people getting on and you're like 'oo who are these new people?' and then I've made friends on the bus as well so like people who get on every day that you can sit with and chat with. It's quite nice. Yeah the first time I did it, it was like really scary, but then I got on and I was like '<u>oh it's fine</u>'.</p> <p>I: What made it easier? What made it less scary?</p> <p>P: Friends. 'Cos like people you can talk to instead of just standing there like 'errr'.</p> <p>I: Did you have to get the bus when you were in primary school?</p> <p>P: No.</p> <p>I: What was that like then, having to get the bus and having to get yourself home without getting picked up?</p>	<p>new friends - sense of new opportunities</p> <p>friends on bus - friends as a measure of inclusion + success?</p> <p>need for relationships / anxiety of being alone?</p> <p>bus originally scary - surprised that it it was actually okay</p>
<p>individual resilience</p>	<p>109</p> <p>110</p>	<p>P: It was nerve-wracking but like you get used to it, yeah, it's quite easy to get used to 'cos like you do it every day so yeah.</p>	<p>firm base in 'friends' - certain.</p> <p>friends - bring you a sense of belonging.</p> <p>it almost a fear of being on own?</p>
<p>Teaching as a source of anxiety</p> <p>practical challenges</p>	<p>111</p> <p>112</p> <p>113</p> <p>114</p> <p>115</p> <p>116</p> <p>117</p>	<p>I: So the best part has been the friendships and it sounds like to me that you have a good friendship group. Has there been anything that's been really challenging at secondary school?</p> <p>P: Like different classes because they, think they go on for longer 'cos I only get three lessons in one day but they go on for a very long time and some of the questions and answers and stuff are really like tricky and some of them are really easy.</p>	<p>bus - nerve wracking initially but get used to it. - sense of individual resilience.</p>
			<p>teaching + learning as challenging.</p> <p>change from primary - need for adjustment.</p> <p>practical challenges / expectations of focusing on one lesson for longer.</p>

<p>insignificance of preparation</p> <p>rules as helpful in containing anxiety</p> <p>phase sense of growing up</p>	118	I: So it's the longer lessons is quite challenging. Okay so did, when you started at	<p>preparation - the fact that she can't remember suggests it wasn't anything much / or informative</p> <p>rules - source of containment when everything is new & anxiety provoking?</p> <p>preparation chat about school rules - containment</p> <p>mobile phone - getting a + security? phone as a symbol of growing up? identity?</p> <p>at all - rules are important + trivial</p> <p>mobile phone taken away as sad - phones are for communicating with friends - so taken away is sad b/c it means isolation from friends?</p> <p>friends - source of support & resilience</p> <p>over reliance on friends? friends becoming main attachment source? move away from adults? almost a need to be liked?</p>
	119	secondary school did the secondary school do anything to help you settle in?	
	120	P: I can't remember I think they did because our year manager came into our	
	121	school and had a chat with us about like all the stuff that happens at *SECONDARY	
	122	SCHOOL* like the school rules and stuff.	
	123	I: So someone came from the secondary school to your primary school? And what	
	124	did they do when they came to see you at primary school?	
	125	P: They saw the whole group of us that were going to *SECONDARY SCHOOL*,	
	126	um, and like they chatted about school rules, they let us ask questions like	
	127	bringing your phone in on the bus and like they said you're not allowed phones,	
<p>friends as a source of support / a protective factor</p> <p>attachment to peers</p>	128	so like most people have to hide them in their bags and stuff.	
	129	I: Okay so you can take them in but you can't show them...	
	130	P: ...show them <u>at all</u> , otherwise they get taken off which is very sad.	
	131	I: So the secondary school did that before you left primary, what about when you	
	132	started at secondary school so in those first few weeks did they do anything?	
	133	P: Yeah they let me be in the same form as one of my best friends from primary	
	134	and um, so that was really helpful because weren't in all in the same classes but it	
	135	was helpful just knowing that there was someone you could go to if like you were	
	136	finding it really hard.	
	137	I: And do you have any members of staff in school that you can go to?	
	138	P: Yeah.	

peers as main source of attachment

role of staff as practical support/fixer	139	I: Who do you go to?	
	140	P: Progress Leads. Um, like, um, the Head Teacher, um Yeah Managers, stuff like	members of staff
	141	that.	
	142	I: So loads of people, so you've got loads of people you can go to. And are these	
	143	people helpful when you go and see them?	more hesitant + unsure when speaking about staff - not important to her?
	144	P: Yeah.	
	145	I: In what way are they helpful?	
	146	P: Um they just like give you advice, tell you what to do.	advice from staff - staff as a source of practical support, less about listening.
	147	I: Can you give me an example?	
	148	P: So, if someone was being horrible to you, like bullying you and stuff like that,	staff fix problems - it's almost like they're not there as source of emotional support?
	149	they'd tell you to like stay away from them, not talk to them, not engage with	
	150	them, like if they're being nasty just walk away from it and just blank it out. And	
	151	stuff like that.	
	152	I: So like some advice, okay. And if you have a really tricky day at school and things	
	153	seem really difficult on a particular day is there someone you can go to to talk to?	
	154	P: Yeah mostly the year manager.	
	155	I: And how does the year manager help you?	
	156	P: Gives you advice. Then she'll have a chat with the people who aren't being very	advice from staff - fixer of issues

role of staff fixing issues	157	good or what's happening and, just sort them out and then you'll be alright.	and then everything is fixed - like being at primary school?
	158	I: Is there anything else that anybody could do to help you settle in more or when	
	159	you have tricky days?	
friendships as central to XP	160	P: Not really I don't really have tricky days at school, 'cos I like school and some of	school as where you meet friends.
friends provide sense of belonging at school	161	my friends are like 'what, you like school!' I'm like 'yeah I like school 'cos if I	relationships as most important
	162	hadn't gone to school I wouldn't have met you guys' and they're like 'oh yeah'.	need for friends, need to belong.
	163	I: It sounds like to me that you like school because you've got a really good	create a sense of belonging.
	164	friendship group. What else makes you like school?	
	165	P: I like some of the lessons as well.	
	166	I: Okay, yeah, which lessons do you like the most?	
	167	P: Science, art, and music.	
	168	I: What is it about those ones that makes you like them the most?	
sense of new opportunity	169	P: Um, they're just like really like, interesting and exciting, yeah. And in PE, I like	lessons - sense of new
	170	PE as well and in PE you, like at the end of the term you can do something really	opportunities at secondary that
	171	fun, like play different games.	werent at primary?
	172	I: So it sounds like it's been really positive. So somebody from the secondary	
	173	school came to talk to you at primary school. Did the primary school do anything	
	174	else to help you when you were getting ready to move to secondary school?	
	175	P: I don't think so. I can't really remember. I did do this group at my school with	primary school group - friends of being
	176	our care team, um and all my friends, well some of my friends were there. Um	

individual resilience	177	some of the people that were going to *SECONDARY SCHOOL*.	
	178	I: What was that group about?	
	179	P: Like making friends at school. I was fine with that, 'cos I thought it would be	people feel positive about skills in making new friends. individual resilience.
	180	alright.	
	181	I: Was it helpful?	
	182	P: Yeah a bit.	
identity & difference need to fit in/ belong	183	I: In what way was it helpful?	
	184	P: Err, like just being there and knowing that other people were frightened as you	knowing others are worried - doesn't want to be seen as different by others - consideration of identity. all about a need to fit in/ have friends & feel a sense of belonging.
	185	are. And like not having to worry anymore because you'd know that you weren't	
	186	the odd one out.	
concerns re safety/ vulnerability practical challenges independence concerns	187	I: Yeah. You used the word frightened, what were you frightened about when you	
	188	were getting ready to move?	concerns - sources of anxiety, safety concerns, practical challenges, worries about being more independent.
	189	P: Well bigger students, shouty teachers, bigger school, getting the bus, stuff like	
	190	that.	
	191	I: So a bigger building, more people and being a bit more independent. And do	
	192	you think that you have been okay with those things?	
	193	P: Yeah.	
	194	I: So you had that group that helped you with friendships, could it have been	
	195	more helpful in any way?	

insignificance of preparation	196	P: No not really.	
	197	I: Okay, and did you get any information about *SECONDARY SCHOOL* before you	
	198	went there?	
	199	P: Sort of, 'cos we got like little booklets about *SECONDARY SCHOOL* telling you	no real preparation for secondary, booklets with information sense that she feels she didn't really need any support moving to secondary - not overly concerned?
	200	like what the teachers are and stuff like that but not really.	
	201	I: And did that go to everybody that was going there?	
	202	P: Yeah, all like the new Year 7s.	
	203	I: Okay, okay so sounds like you got the same thing as everybody else. Did you get	
	204	anything extra to anybody else?	
	205	P: I don't think so, I don't know.	
	206	I: Was there anything extra that would have been helpful?	
	207	P: No not really.	
	208	I: Do you think you had a good level of support at that time?	is this a difficulty reflecting or is everything just been totally fine - almost like it was a non-event?
	209	P: Yeah.	
	210	I: So we've talked about the primary school and we've talked about the secondary	
	211	school. Was there anyone else that helped you at that time, maybe family,	
	212	friends, other people that you know?	

<p>insignificance of preparation</p>	213	P: Yeah family and friends were like encouraging.	encouragement from family/friends
	214	I: In what way?	
	215	P: Saying 'oh you can do it, you'll be fine, you're really good at stuff' and stuff like	almost like it had no impact on
	216	that.	her; 'stuff like that'
	217	I: Okay so making you feel a bit more positive about it. So we've talked a lot about	
	218	what support everybody had, do you think it would have been helpful at all to	
	219	have any extra support?	
	220	P: No.	sense of it being a non-event. Does
	221	I: Do you think that the members of staff at *SECONDARY SCHOOL*, do you think	he see friends as the main source
	222	they understand you?	of support?
<p>role of teacher as to teach/practical fixing advice.</p>	223	P: Sort of, not really.	more hesitant here - trying to work
	224	I: What do you mean by that?	out what there is to understand.
	225	P: Umm, I don't really know. They don't like really understand that, um, I don't	doesn't see herself as 'adopted'
	226	really know.	child maybe? doesn't see herself
	227	I: So you said sort of so that's kind of like yes and no isn't it. What do you think it	as having any extra needs /
	228	is that they do understand about you?	difficulties etc.
	229	P: I don't actually know if they do understand.	teacher role - not there to understand
	230	I: Okay, in what way?	& provide emotional support, just to
			teach & practical advice?
			(reconsider question) hesitant - uncertain.
			teacher relationships not important
			almost like why would they understand you?!

<p>role of teachers as to teach/fix</p>	<p>231 232 233 234</p>	<p>P: Um, don't really know, 'cos like they don't understand me because like they're not my friends or family, they're <u>just teachers</u> who like you've never even seen in your life and now you've just met them so no they don't really understand 'cos they're not like friends or family.</p>	<p>teachers don't understand b/c not friends or family - see the role of the teacher as just teaching? not a source of support (pastoral/emotional)? <u>just teachers</u> or individual needs not understood?</p>
	<p>235</p>	<p>I: So what is it that your friends and family understand more?</p>	
	<p>236</p>	<p>P: I'm very chatty, I get overexcited sometimes. I can get stressed sometimes.</p>	
	<p>237</p>	<p>I: What is it that makes you get overexcited?</p>	<p>chatty/overexcited/stressed - is her chattyness fulfilling a need for connection + relationship</p>
<p>(need to belong)</p>	<p>238</p>	<p>P: Seeing new people, making friends, just being excited.</p>	<p>as source of excitement people/friends - need for connection - see chatting as way to bring this about.</p>
	<p>239</p>	<p>I: And what is it that makes you stressed?</p>	
<p>(People as a source of stress)</p>	<p>240</p>	<p>P: People sometimes. 'Cos like if they get on your nerves or something and like</p>	
	<p>241</p>	<p>they won't stop annoying you then you get stressed.</p>	<p>people as source of stress - does she find it difficult to understand social communication?</p>
	<p>242</p>	<p>I: So you feel stressed and then how do you react when you get stressed?</p>	
	<p>243</p>	<p>P: I get a bit angry.</p>	<p>angry when when stressed & shouty.</p>
	<p>244</p>	<p>I: In what way?</p>	<p>it is it her difficulties understanding relationships & social communication - attachment?</p>
	<p>245</p>	<p>P: Like shouty.</p>	
	<p>246</p>	<p>I: Is that what happens at home or does that happen at school?</p>	
	<p>247</p>	<p>P: At home and school sometimes.</p>	

lack of understanding of adoption	248	I: And when you get a bit stressed and a bit shouty and a bit angry if you're at	
	249	school, what do you do at those times?	
	250	P: Walk away, just walk away.	is this a stock response? almost like what she thinks adults want to hear?
	251	I: Very sensible. When I said to you, do you think they understand you, you were a	
	252	bit unsure. Do you think they understand about what it's like to be adopted?	
	253	P: No.	people don't understand about being adopted. - is this staff or pupils?
	254	I: Do you think it would be helpful for members of staff to understand?	
	255	P: Yeah.	I ask about staff & she answers about peers - em emphasise their centrality to her XP.
	256	I: Why do you think it would be helpful?	
	257	P: 'Cos then, like the kids in our school, some of them are very annoying,	social relationships as difficult.
identity & difference concerns re perception of peers of her _____ _____ _____ _____ need to belong	258	extremely, because they're always going, like there's this weird song that people	peers not understanding adoption. - she doesn't want to be labelled / people make assumptions?
	259	sing about people being adopted and they say weird stuff about people being	
	260	adopted. So like if someone annoys them they say 'oh you're adopted', stuff like	'adopted' as an insult
	261	that, it's really weird, I don't really understand it.	she's aware of her adoptive status but doesn't want to be seen seen as different and bullied as a result of it? Disruption to her sense of belonging if they sang at her / disrupt need for connection? fear of being isolated?
	262	I: Have you had that said to you?	
	263	P: No not directly at me, they just sing it and it's really annoying.	
	264	I: How does it make you feel when they sing something like that?	
	265	P: It's a bit awkward 'cos like they don't understand it properly, they just don't	
	266	understand what it is. 'Cos we were reading Matilda in English and you know at	peers not understanding adoption
			she doesn't understand insult - difficulties understanding complexity of social interaction at secondary?

* concerns re being seen as different.

identity + difference	<p>267 the end that she gets adopted by Miss Honey and then like I was just sitting there</p> <p>268 like 'aw that's so cute' but like no one really understands what it is and then</p> <p>269 everyone started talking about it. I was like no one really understands 'cos like I</p> <p>270 don't think anyone else in that class except from someone else I know in that class</p> <p>271 is adopted. So I think both of us were sitting there like 'huh they don't really</p> <p>272 understand it'.</p>	<p>her worries about how others may see her - identity & difference - she just wants to fit in?</p>
identity + difference	<p>273 I: What do you think it is that they don't understand?</p>	
need to belong	<p>274 P: Most people think it's a bad thing I think.</p>	<p>peers see adoption as a bad thing - she knows it's not a bad thing but doesn't want to be seen as different?</p>
* concerns re perception of peers of her	<p>275 I: Okay, what makes you say that?</p>	<p>adoption as an insult? - she doesn't understand why - doesn't want to be perceived as different. difficulties with social complexities?</p>
lack of (peer) understanding of adoption	<p>276 P: 'Cos like they're always singing that song about it. Like if someone annoys them</p> <p>277 they're saying that they're adopted. It doesn't make sense.</p>	<p>reinforcement of that is what she thinks - is she worried that if people know she's adopted, she will be treated differently.</p>
* concerns re perception of peers of her	<p>278 I: What is it about it that makes it a bad thing to them do you think?</p>	
	<p>279 P: I don't know, I think they mean, I think they think that it means that like your</p> <p>280 parents hate you or something and they want to just chuck you out or something.</p> <p>281 <u>That's really not it.</u></p>	<p>wish for peers to understand adoption not individuals - not wanting to be seen as different, real need for people to like her, attachment.</p>
identity of difference need to belong	<p>282 I: So would it be helpful do you think for people, so for the other students in your</p> <p>283 class, to know what it's actually really like?</p>	
	<p>284 P: Yeah, not about the people in the class but like for them to actually know what</p> <p>285 it is and understand what it is.</p>	
	<p>286 I: And what might happen do you think as a result of that, what might be</p> <p>287 different?</p>	

line number missing - shift all others up from this point.

concerns re being seen as different	288 289	P: People wouldn't sing the stupid songs they do and just like saying 'oh I don't like you, you're adopted'. Like, not like, I don't like you because you're adopted, I don't like you so I'm calling you that.	adoption as an insult - she can't understand that why people would do this? fear people won't like her if they know she's adopted?
	290 291	I: So that lesson you were in when you were doing Matilda, or those lessons when you read Matilda, how did you feel when you were reading that story?	
	292 293	P: I liked it, I liked the ending because she gets adopted and it's cute. 'Cos she's a cute little girl.	
	294 295	I: Do you think that there have ever been any lessons where something, you've been learning about something and it's had a different impact on you?	
	296	P: No.	
	297 298	I: So we've talked about the other people in your class knowing, do you think it would be good for staff to know that someone is adopted?	
	299	P: Yeah.	
	300	I: In what way would that be a good thing?	
	301 302	P: 'Cos then if someone is in that class and they are, then the teachers would know not to make a massive deal out of it, whatever they do.	
	303	I: Would it have any difference on you?	
concerns re being seen as different	304	P: Yeah.	staff knowing someone is adopted & being sensitive about it - she doesn't want attention drawn to her & seen as different? if different she won't have a sense have friends? disrupt sense of belonging?

	305	I: In what way?	
	306	P: No one would be like pointing it out a lot.	
	307	I: What do you mean by that?	
	308	P: Like, no one would make a <u>big big</u> deal out of it.	
	309	I: Do people make a big deal out of it now?	
concerns re being seen as different	310	P: Sort of, 'cos if someone tells someone that themselves are adopted they go 'oh	
	311	really' and then they're like 'oh my god I'm so sorry'. And then you're just like	
	312	'what, why are you sorry?'	
	313	I: How do you feel when people apologise to you like that?	
lack of (peer) understanding of adoption	314	P: I say 'why, why are you apologising?' They're like 'because because they didn't	
	315	like you' and I'm like 'no that's not it, that's really not it'.	
	316	I: Okay, so they don't understand the reasons for it. Okay. The staff that you have,	
	317	do you think that they know and understand?	
	318	P: No, I don't think they do know.	
	319	I: Do you think it would be good for your teachers to know?	
concerns re being seen as different	320	P: Yeah. 'Cos like in science at some point you're gonna have to talk about like	
	321	genes and like people, like look alike to you but then that's not the same if you're	
	322	adopted. And if you're in scope, then you're talking about family trees, you're	
curriculum impacts of adoption	323	gonna be like, I have two! So what do I do! So the teachers wouldn't make it	

people pointing out adoption/making a big deal of it.

again I asked about staff awareness & again she has gone back to speaking about peers.

repetition of 'big' - her perception of people mentioning it, is as a big deal - may have only been mentioned once but big impact as she's so aware of being adopted & being different?

people apologising to those who are adopted she's very aware of what people think of her - need to fit in / not be different. almost a sense of frustration that peers don't understand?

staff being aware, curriculum for adopted children & sensitivities is she aware of being different to other children & doesn't want this difference to be made obvious to

everyone? would they then like her less?

→ also being adopted can make curriculum harder - cause more anxiety?

	324	tricky.	
	325	I: Okay so it would be a difficult lesson because it would be different for you then	
	326	it would be for other children that were not adopted. Is there anything else that	
	327	how them knowing would be helpful?	real need to fit in with others.
role of teacher to fix concerns re being seen as different	328	P: Yeah, 'cos if someone was singing that song or being rude to someone and	back to peers - very significant to her
	329	saying 'I don't like you so I'm calling you that' then the teachers would point them	peers using adoption as an insult
	330	out on it and say 'no, no you should not do that'. And then it would feel <u>normal</u> .	teachers role - role is to fix issues + move on what is normal?
	331	I: Okay so if you could, if I just suddenly brought in a long line of adopted young	↳ confused about why adoption is an insult? not able to follow social complexities of secondary?
	332	people who are currently in Year 6, so they're in their final year at primary school,	
	333	what advice would you give them about starting secondary school?	
friendships as central to XP.	334	P: Like how to make friends and like keeping them and stuff, um.	advice about making friends.
	335	I: What would your advice be about making friends?	↳ central to XP for her - real need to fit in.
	336	P: Um, if someone's like on their own you can go up to them and say um, 'do you	
	337	mind if I hang around with you' or 'do you want to play with us' or something like	
	338	that. 'Cos they wouldn't feel so lonely.	advice is very primary school based - still see friendships in a primary way - not yet aware of or ready for the social complexities of secondary school?
	339	I: What was your experience like of making friends?	
friends as a source of support / protective factor	340	P: Well, on our tester day at school, um, like it was a whole bunch of Year 7s just	making friends on tester day - anxiety
	341	standing there, like, with other people. And then I was just standing there 'cos I	at last - relief of finding friends, feeling less isolated?
	342	was the first one of my school there, I was just standing there like 'where are all	feel good about self when including others? so others will then include her?
need to belong	343	my friends' so I found two of them <u>at last</u> and then there was a kid sitting on their	
	344	own and then I saw another child walk up to them and say 'oh do you wanna hang	
	345	out with us' and stuff like that so that was like really nice.	

<p>significance of change sense of moving on/new & fresh start</p> <p>practical challenges concerns re safety/ vulnerability</p>	346	I: So do you think you had a good experience then making friends?	
	347	P: Yeah.	
	348	I: Have you had a good experience in your relationships with your teachers?	
	349	P: I think so, I talk a lot so I dunno!	teachers -- not viewed as important?
	350	I: In what way do you think it's been a good experience?	
	351	P: Knowing that you've moved up 'cos it means like you're getting older. I mean	moved up, new chapter of your life - identity is changing, sense of feeling older? is it an opportunity to almost start afresh, reinvent yourself? she almost seems surprised she has direct
	352	like you're getting older anyway but like, you're going to a new chapter like of	
	353	your life.	
	354	I: What do you mean by a new chapter of your life?	
	355	P: Like it's a different experience from like your old school.	
	356	I: In what way?	
	357	P: Bigger school, more people, bigger students again.	
	358	I: And when you have that experience and it's a new experience, it's a different	differences from primary - all related to anxiety about feeling safe at secondary school.
	359	experience, what are you thinking about it and feeling about it?	
	360	P: Um, could you repeat the question?	
	361	I: So you told me it's a different experience because it's a new chapter in your life.	
	362	So when you're coming up to start a new chapter, what are you thinking about it	

<p>practical challenges concerns re safety / vulnerability</p> <p>concerns re safety / vulnerability</p> <p>friends as a source of support / protective factor attachment to peers</p> <p>teachers as a source of anxiety loss of primary nurture</p>	<p>363</p> <p>364</p> <p>365</p> <p>366</p> <p>367</p> <p>368</p> <p>369</p> <p>370</p> <p>371</p> <p>372</p> <p>373</p> <p>374</p> <p>375</p> <p>376</p> <p>377</p> <p>378</p> <p>379</p> <p>380</p> <p>381</p>	<p>at that time?</p> <p>P: It's gonna have changed. Bigger school again, more people, older kids, you're now the youngest.</p> <p>I: Um, okay so if they came in so you'd give some advice about making friends, would you give them any other advice about what it's like to start secondary school?</p> <p>P: It can be tricky but it gets better.</p> <p>I: Okay, what would you say was tricky about it, if one of them said to you, how can it be tricky?</p> <p>P: You're getting to know new people, you don't know whether they're going to be nice or horrible.</p> <p>I: Okay, and then someone else said but how does it get better?</p> <p>P: Um, it gets better 'cos like if you make friends then you know that they're gonna help you along the way.</p> <p>I: So the friendships are really important. So when you go back in January, what sorts of things could make your time there even better?</p> <p>P: Teachers being less shouty. They shout at the whole class.</p> <p>I: Anything else?</p> <p>P: The students behaving more!</p>	<p>differences in secondary - all related to anxieties around feeling safe & vulnerable at secondary.</p> <p>mix of emotions</p> <p>meeting new people - worries around safety + vulnerability, awareness of possible impacts of being youngest/smallest.</p> <p>friends as a source of support - they are her go to - attachment patterns moving towards peers, not teachers. teenage identity.</p> <p>teachers as a source of anxiety - different to the nurture teachers provide at primary? loss of nurturing approach?</p> <p>student behaviour - anxiety re safety. laughter</p>
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peers as main source of attachment

<p>sense of new opportunity sense of change anxiety re social belonging</p>	<p>382 383</p>	<p>I: So I've got two more questions for you, my first one is, if you could summarise what your term at *SECONDARY SCHOOL* has been like in one sentence?</p>	<p>mix of emotions exciting experience - new people + more interesting - sense of opportunity concerns re fitting in - main source of anxiety is social belonging</p>
<p>sense of new opportunity _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>384 385 386 387</p>	<p>P: Um, it's been exciting, you go on to it being a bit 'oooh where do I fit in?' then it gets better 'cos like more friends, better experiences at school like meeting new people, having new teachers, having more of an interesting school, more creative and stuff.</p>	<p>new lessons - different things, more creative, better than primary sense of opportunity</p>
<p>lack of (peer) understanding of adoption _____ concerns re being seen as different</p>	<p>388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404</p>	<p>I: Oh how is it more creative?</p> <p>P: Like in different lessons. Like you get to do different things and it's like much better than primary 'cos in primary you get shorter lessons and so many lessons! Well that's what happened in our school. And then you just go on to be like 'oh god this is going on forever'. Like so many different lessons flashing by but like, if you get three lessons like I do in one day, it makes it nicer 'cos like you got more time to do whatever you're doing in class. So it's exciting.</p> <p>I: So it's not a rush. Okay so my last question is, is there anything else that you would like to tell me about what it was like to start secondary school as an adopted young person?</p> <p>P: I know this sounds really rare and it in, but like, when you go, if like something's happened at home, like a loss of someone or a loss of like an animal, it can be hard as well because like, you might go to school and know they're like ill or something and. My mum usually says for adopted people, it's quite hard to lose someone 'cos like you're moving on again and like some people might just make fun of you if you're like upset and like say 'oh just get over it' or 'get a new cat' or 'get a new dog' or something. 'Cos I, I was told that at school when I lost my cat.</p>	<p>3 lessons _____ in one day - more time - new opportunities - is this b/c she experiences difficulties with processing / EF so would find it hard to keep up with shorter faster paced lessons? less lessons to reduce anxiety re teaching + learning?</p> <p>_____ becomes quieter in speech - signal a sense of loss + sadness? loss of cat - this was a big moment for her. Mum's support - help her to understand her difficulties 'being made fun of' when lost cat; seen as different, feel different & unsupported, does this make her question her identity + belonging with her peers? see secondary as a harsh place?</p>

<p>friends as a source of support / protective factor friends provide sense of belonging</p>	<p>405 I: And how did you feel when they said that to you?</p> <p>406 P: Really upset. One of my friends actually had a huge go at the person who said</p> <p>407 that 'cos like on that day I was like really upset and like she just had a massive go</p> <p>408 at them. It was nice to know that someone was there to stick up for you.</p> <p>409 I: So it can be difficult when you've lost something or somebody, like an animal or</p> <p>410 a person, and then having to go into school when you've got those feelings can be</p> <p>411 quite challenging for you.</p>	<p>friend sticking up for you - friends are her source of support? need to have friends to be able to fit in</p>
<p>lack of peer understanding of emotions / difficulties</p>	<p>412 P: And like if you're really upset you might get upset with someone for like no</p> <p>413 reason and then be like 'why are you upset with me' and stuff like that.</p> <p>414 I: Did you lose your cat when you were at *SECONDARY SCHOOL*?</p> <p>415 P: Mm.</p> <p>416 I: I'm really sorry to hear about your cat.</p> <p>417 P: It's okay.</p> <p>418 I: It must have been really difficult. It sounds like Mum helped you at the time and</p> <p>419 your friend helped you at school. It's really sad.</p>	<p>get upset with others for no reason - she sees how her upset affected others but is there a sense that she didn't feel as if anyone understood her sadness & reasons for? sense of isolation + rejection apart from the one friend?</p>
<p>loss of primary nurture as source a protective factor</p>	<p>420 P: I was sad at school because like people were giving out Christmas cards and</p> <p>421 then I knew that this year I wouldn't be spending Christmas with my cat which is</p> <p>422 really really weird to think that and like everyone else was like spending Christmas</p> <p>423 with their pets and stuff and like their friends and family. And I'd lost someone</p> <p>424 who was special.</p>	<p>loss of cat & not there at xmas - real sense of emptiness like a part of her had been taken away? would she have found it easier to deal with had she been at primary school where 1st nurture, support and whole class support at loss of a pet? reliant on others for resilience?</p>

<p>loss of primary nurture as a protective factor.</p> <p>loss of</p> <p>sense of change</p> <p>teacher role as for teaching not emotional support</p>	<p>425 I: What was important and special to you about your cat?</p> <p>426 P: Like if I was like upset one day, I'd just go in there and just like sit down with</p> <p>427 him and just like talk to him. He'd always like snuggle up to me 'cos he was a cat</p> <p>428 so that's what cats do but, my other cat, she still does it now. She heard her name</p> <p>429 so she just woke up.</p> <p>430 I: So you had that quite difficult experience yeah. Was there anything anybody</p> <p>431 else could have done at that time to be helpful?</p> <p>432 P: No not really, but we had a fire bell on the day that I lost him, like 'cos it was a</p> <p>433 Monday, we had a fire bell and I, I told my form teacher because we line up in our</p> <p>434 forms in register order and I was in the wrong order. She came up to me and said</p> <p>435 'Violet, I know you're having a really bad day today but get in the right order' and</p> <p>436 I was like 'I'm having a really bad day, you just made it worse'. Don't want to be</p> <p>437 rude to that teacher but.</p> <p>438 I: Did you feel that she didn't understand maybe what you were feeling?</p> <p>439 P: Yeah I don't know if she'd had a pet or not or still has one but I don't think she</p> <p>440 understood.</p> <p>441 I: So things like that can be really quite difficult and Mum said to you that adopted</p> <p>442 young people can find it difficult to lose something. It sounds like to me that that</p> <p>443 was a really sad time and it would have been nice if other people, so both your</p> <p>444 form tutor and some other people in your class or your form kind of understood it</p> <p>445 a little bit more. Because obviously you had your friend who stood up for you, so</p> <p>446 you've got some people that understood you and some people that...</p> <p>447 P: ...yeah.</p>	<p>cat as a source of comfort at end of day - does she take home a lot of stress + anxiety that has built up during the day? social anxieties?</p> <p>teacher not understanding child's upset and teacher response upsetting child further. - different to primary - would have been a whole class sing + dance about cat dying - child not yet ready for secondary - still need the nurture inherent in primary? sense of loss & change from primary.</p> <p>teacher not understood - construct of 2ndary teachers as teacher not for emotional support - loss of primary school response? Is this incident the reason why she doesn't see staff as a source of support? - staff are mean / cold / not understanding. she couldn't understand why no one understood her sadness?</p>
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	448	I: Okay, is there anything else that you want to tell me?	
	449	P: No I don't think so.	
451	450	I: Okay so that is it.	

Debrief information was provided to the participant. The participant was thanked for their involvement and reminded what will happen next with the information they provided as well as the right to withdraw. Participants were also signposted to possible sources of support if they felt emotional following the interview.

Appendix 24: Example of transcript and analysis – parent participant

- descriptive comments
- linguistic comments
- conceptual comments

Transcript: Parent Participant – Jessica

Information regarding the purpose of the interview, the use of the voice recorder, data security, confidentiality, anonymity, and the interview process was provided prior to the interview commencing. The participant was then provided with the opportunity to ask questions. The interviewer confirmed whether the participant was happy to carry on.

	Line	Transcript	Comments
emergent themes	1	Interviewer (I): Can you tell me about your daughter's experience of starting secondary school please?	
	2		
expectations	3	Participant (P): Yep um, I would say it's gone probably about, I was going to say it's gone better than I anticipated but actually I think it has gone probably as I was expecting and the reason I say that is because I know transition is really difficult um for children who are adopted, but in her primary school they had a lot of different subject teachers which was quite unusual and they had that right from um a very very young age; so different maths teacher, different PE teacher, art teacher, English teacher, they had a teacher like a main teacher that they belonged to but they always sort of moved around and although I hated that for her at primary and I don't think it did her any favours then, I always thought well maybe it will mean that she can cope a bit better at secondary and I think that's probably happened. Um, obviously because she's adopted we could choose a school and the school is a good 5 miles from here. Um, I take her in by car every morning, she doesn't want to get the bus so in that aspect of transition I only was hoping to do that for a couple of weeks then I thought she would find that she doesn't want to do that. So there are some um, I suppose anxieties or concerns, it is a long way and *LOCAL AUTHORITY* is a bit rough as well, um but she gets the bus home, and so she has made friends because it was an oversubscribed school she didn't really know anybody but I'm pleased she's making friends and she's getting a peer group going so I would say probably, um, if I was doing it out of 10, I was probably	<p>transition helped to clarify thoughts? transition built up as big thing in parent's head - had expectations?</p> <p>recognition of transition as difficult for adopted child</p> <p>different teachers in primary - not able to form an attachment concerns.</p> <p>comparison to primary systems</p> <p>importance of preparing for secondary</p> <p>bus journey was - was she concerned re independence that comes with secondary?</p> <p>have not met was concerned</p> <p>consideration of local area - is this her way of justifying her concerns?</p> <p>relationships with peers</p>
importance of preparation	10		
importance of child's independence	11		
importance of child's friendships & belonging	12		
	13		
	14		
	15		
	16		
	17		
	18		
	19		
	20		

child's friendships as important - want child to have a sense of belonging? identity as a normal included child. awareness of attachment

anxiety re
social
belonging

surprise at
child's response

concerns re
child's
independence

21	expecting it to be 6 and it's been a 7 I would say, so a little bit better but within where I	expectations of how it would go
22	thought she'd be.	
23	I: So what was that 6 – when you had 6 in your head what did that look like to you?	
24	P: I was worried because she didn't know anyone so no one, I think probably three	
25	children in her school and her school's a big primary as well of about 800 so I think she	
26	was five form entry so there were only three children, four including her, out of 5	
27	classes that were going there and I was a bit worried about, um, you know will she or	
28	who will she make friends with and how she would make friends. They also had um	concerns about making friends - see centrality of relationships to child's success at secondary
29	they were part of a MAT so the schools, the primary schools that were in the MAT had	
30	a week, two weeks I think taster days at the secondary school 'cos she was in one of	
31	the primary schools that was in the MAT she wasn't allowed to be in that, and I was	
32	quite worried about that, I didn't know until the very last minute, I feel they are all	
33	going to have their feet under the table and that she would be left out 'cos she didn't	possibility of being left out worries
34	know anyone and left out 'cos she hadn't had those experiences, just knowing where	
35	the <u>loos</u> were and what the building looked like, but actually it didn't seem to have had	loos - layout of school. use of word 'actually' - surprised about how child coped? did she expect her to struggle more? contradiction to 6/7 scaling?
36	an impact at all really.	
37	I: Ok so what does that 7, you were expecting a 6 and it is a 7 so what is it that's	
38	pushed it above that 6?	
39	P: Um, good question; I think she's, I thought she'd lose everything, she's quite scatty,	had concerns prior to starting - use job knowledge & predict experience. child needs support
40	<u>executive functioning</u> , but she hasn't, and she does need quite a lot of support, but I	losing things layout of school.
41	thought we would just have, um, there would be a lot of things that would get lost or	
42	she would panic about finding her way around the building that kind of thing but we've	
43	had none of that. Can't use the school planner but I kind of knew that would be the	
44	case but, I'm sure you might come to homework she's; maybe I'll leave that, I'll park	homework - park homework - needing to give that its own space - signify the imp act it's having on parent?
45	that 'cos that's quite a big thing for her but generally, um, I thought she might be more	

Surprise at child's response	46	overwhelmed than she actually has been, she has been overwhelmed but not as much	expectations of child's response
	47	as I thought.	
	48	I: What do you think has helped her to like manage that overwhelmed feeling and all	
	49	those changes?	
	50	P: I think some of it was the primary school experience of having different teachers and	different teachers in primary - comparison
importance of preparation	51	moving to different classrooms. They're quite, they are a big school as well so although	
	52	obviously a secondary school is much much bigger because it's a big secondary she	secondary school size: holding a construct of
	53	wasn't like, some of my schools over there have got like 60 kids in them, and I always	secondary schools based on previous XP, used
misunderstanding frustration expectations	54	thought goodness what's it like for when they go to secondary whereas I knew that she	to predict child's response more than child's own personality?
	55	would cope with the hubbub and the noise and the bustle um, what was the question	tail's off - ask for question again - or
	56	again?	a tangent? question to restart
	57	I: What helped her managed that overwhelmed feeling?	
	58	P: Yeah, the reason I got stuck on that is because I don't know that's why I couldn't	
	59	remember the question because there isn't anything; they did do some transition	
	60	work at primary because I asked them to do it, but that was more managing the	had to ask for support feeling of being isolated
	61	ending. In terms of starting I couldn't tell you because for example we've not had a	and cut off from school? no meeting with school
disconnect from school	62	parent's evening yet, we've not <u>even had a</u> meet the tutors night like I know some of	'even had' - stress dislike of communication
	63	my friends who have got children in other schools have, so I couldn't even say it's been	
	64	a particular teacher or, I really don't know. I think other than that she's used to moving	
	65	around. <u>Oh, it's gonna get me thinking that question.</u> Um, I suppose we do scaffold her	functional - recognition of not knowing answer
	66	quite a lot you know we do make sure that she's, you know we've got like a timetable	home support for child
	67	up there that she can check, there's also one in her bedroom things like that. But I, I	does she she feel the school don't recognise child's
	68	couldn't pinpoint there's anything particularly the school has done that she's got,	needs & therefore parental expertise in child?
	69	there's nothing, if we'd had a parent's evening I might be able to say 'oh I can tell you	lack of contact with school
	70	this that and the other' because we've had no contact with them other than one	child is happy
	71	meeting, um, that we arranged. I couldn't really tell, she just seems to be happy there,	

importance of child's relationships belonging	72	she likes her little group of friends so that's definitely helped. I mean, I don't know if	friendships helped - sense of belonging want child to be included socially. legislative money use
	73	she said or not but, probably about 4 years ago, *LOCAL AUTHORITY* organised, um,	
	74	using the first wave of the adoption support fund money for various families who were	
	75	adopted to get together and we went to *LOCATION* and did like a weekend and one	
	76	of the boys there that she met was friends with, also is in Year 7, actually her boyfriend	
disconnect from school	77	now. And I think maybe that little link has helped a bit, she was really pleased to see	comparison to primary systems. lack of contact with school - but was expected. May say 'expected' but tail = off repeated reference of lack of contact - it's bothering her.
	78	him but she's found some friends which I think has been a big thing but no I couldn't,	
	79	it's not like we've had home-school book or lots of meetings or, as expected it feels a	
	80	lot more remote so I don't know.	
	81	I: Remote in what sense?	
expectations	82	P: Well I knew secondary school would have less contact, you don't go pick them up,	secondary school expectations comparison to primary systems - construct of secondary school - used to justify lack of contact to herself & rationalise concerns? feeling cut off from school?
	83	you're not at the school gate, you don't see the teacher every day, you can't drop in	
	84	and ask questions, and so I knew that would be the case so I wasn't so worried about	
	85	that but it is like that so I can't even say it's this that or the other the school's done 'cos	
	86	<u>I don't know what they do.</u> But, I mean the Head is lovely I have to say, when we did	
disconnect from school	87	the parents, um, when you go along and they sort of show off their school so you'll	ethos of school / tweets communication from school. Does this help parent to feel included in school & child's education?
	88	choose them, um, the Head was lovely and I think she is really nurturing, you know,	
	89	they do quite a lot of tweets on Twitter and it's always lovely and she's worked there	
	90	15 years, I think she's really passionate about the children so I really like the ethos that	
	91	she put across.	
feeling included in the school community as containing infilling a need to be involved.	92	I: So can you remember that first day when she went to secondary school?	
	93	P: It's only a couple of months ago, it's ridiculous! Um, I remember the taster day more	
	94	than anything else.	
	95	I: When was that?	

	96	P: July. Probably because she was sat on her own and I remember thinking 'oooh' and	
	97	she was just, the parents could wait outside against the railings and then the kids were	
	98	milling around and she was only about as far away as that tree there. And I remember	
	99	thinking 'oooh' and her lip started to go and I always think that's the sign she's gonna	
	100	cry but she got it together and I said 'ooh speak to that boy there' and they got	
	101	chatting. So I remember that more than, 'cos I suppose we, the parents were waiting	
	102	and seeing them go in, on the first day, I do remember, yeah I drop her in the same	
	103	place I drop her now. She met, it's a bit of a convoluted story, but there was a girl who	
	104	was in her primary school who left to go to another school and I texted her Mum said	
	105	do they want to walk in together so they did meet in that car park and then they just	
	106	go up a little alleyway and in she went and that was it. She came home, it was such a	
surprise at child's response	107	non-event, I don't remember it, she didn't cry, she didn't seem, she just said 'it was	
disappointment	108	alright' you know and that was it really.	relationships as most important to child settling in friendships
	109	I: Can you remember how she was feeling that morning?	non-event of starting - expected ^{it} to be an event? sense of disappointment?
expectations	110	P: She was quite, she wasn't as, probably wasn't as nervous as I was! She was nervous,	parent more nervous than child - humour
	111	she was nervous, she um, but I think she was ready. I think a lot of them, all children I	repetition (she was nervous)
	112	think when they go, you know the vast majority of them are ready for big school but	what was she nervous about?
	113	no she didn't cry or anything like that, she didn't wasn't unsettled in her sleep, didn't	ready for secondary
uprise at child's response	114	not eat, we've had a bit more of that since she's been there but no nothing. It was a	
disappointment	115	non-event like I said, it wasn't as dramatic as I thought it was gonna be.	not as dramatic as expected - surprise at how it went
	116	I: What was your experience then because you mentioned that you were probably	
	117	more nervous than she was?	
questioning of own views/excessive rumination	118	P: Um, I was really worried about her making friends, I guess that says maybe more	worried about friendships
anxiety re social belonging	119	about me than her but I was really anxious about her not knowing anyone in such a big	questioning self and how she thought she would anxious manage if she
	120	year group because I think they're something like 2,300 children at the school so I think	Secondary school size were child - own
	121	it's easily 11-form entry I think, 10 form, 11 form and I was thinking 'err knowing 3	Secondary XPs

managing anxiety	122	children?' I had asked for this girl that she knew at primary to be in the same form	ask school for support - did she feel as if she school meeting had to do things to manage her own anxieties
	123	group when we'd had this one meeting with the school beforehand and um so that	
	124	was, I just felt that if she had someone to walk through the doors with it would be ok.	
	125	But I was worried about her getting the bus but, actually <u>some of the things around</u>	bus journey worries - ↑ in independence - feeling as if child isn't ready? Hold on to child
one more child's independence	126	<u>school I was more worried about than school itself.</u> You know, so it's quite a big	independence repetition of "rough" - local area considered emphasis on bus worries local area concerns
	127	independence thing to get the bus back on your own and it's <u>quite rough, it's quite</u>	resilience in child do instances make you reevaluate child's own excited for child to go up resilience and uniform patterns of friendships. thinking?
	128	<u>rough, it's just rough.</u> But there was one time when the bus just stopped in the middle	
	129	of town and she got off and she was able to ring me, she cried but she was able to ring	
	130	me, so actually, you know they've got resilience once they do something like that,	
unpleasant child's response	131	don't you think ok well she's coped but I was excited for her as well, I was excited for	
	132	her to go up, you know she had all her uniform and she was pleased and yeah. But I	
	133	just wanted to make sure she had some friends, I wasn't that bothered about the	
excitement	134	teachers and things like that but <u>actually</u> she seemed to find her feet quite quickly so	use of word actually throughout
	135	that was ok.	
	136	I: So it was more the social side?	
	137	P: Absolutely, one thing she probably didn't say and I don't know if it's appropriate, but	period - other factors - growing up - is this another thing which signals the loss of her little girl - difficult coping with growing up
loss of child with growing up	138	she had her period when she first went to school. She'd had it for a few months but it	loos about layout of school
	139	was the very first day of school and I remember thinking 'oh you know that', that was a	
	140	bit of a hassle because you need to know where the <u>loos</u> are. So I was actually quite	
	141	worried about that which I'm sure most parents aren't going to say 'cos they probably	
	142	didn't have that experience but I remember that played on my mind 'cos you want	wanting child to cope
	143	someone to be able to cope with that kind of thing and not have an accident or, but it	
	144	was fine. It seemed like a big deal at the time but she managed it. She'd had it a few	parent feeling child had a lot to deal with
	145	months before but it was just timing with that first day you know when you think, it's	plunge child in deep end checking for confirmation
questioning unviewed excessive anxiety	146	just another thing to, you've got to manage but I mean maybe she had so much to	
	147	manage it was like plunging in the deep end a little. <u>Do you know what I mean?</u>	does she feel she wouldn't have been able to cope had it been her?
	148	Because she didn't have an older brother there <u>like I did when I went to school</u> , you	
	149	know, she didn't know anyone, she had that to cope with that I just mentioned, she	

150	you know had a <u>bus route</u> , I think it was everything at once that it had to be everything	bus journey worries - seeing the bus
151	all at once so she had to do it. I can't think of any other way to put it really!	as a big step in growing up?
152	I: What were your thoughts towards her starting secondary school 'cos you've said to	
153	me that you kind of wanted her to go, you thought she was ready to go. But what were	
154	your thoughts towards it?	
155	P: It's really painful, it's quite painful as parents because we've only got one. We were	
156	one and done! So your, if you've only got one child and I'm sure it's the same if you've	
157	got other children as well, but if you have only got one, you're...is this the right way	
158	round...your first is always your last. So the first time she goes to secondary school is	
159	always going to be the last time any of my children, because I've only got one, will do	
160	that. So it was <u>bitter sweet</u> , I think *DAD* and I were probably more, more upset than	
161	she was in a way. <u>I suppose upset is the right word, yeah</u> . I was excited for her there is	
162	a bit of you that, yeah all your friends have got older children say 'once they're at	
163	secondary that's it <u>you lose them</u> , you know you don't have that same relationship	
164	anymore' and there is an <u>element of truth in that</u> . But I, you know I wanted her to	
165	leave primary, I was ready for her to go to secondary in some ways as well just 'cos	
166	<u>some, the relationships there you know, have carried on!</u> But um, yeah I was, when we	
167	went to get her uniform I was really excited for her, that was a really, that was really	
168	lovely.	
169	I: What was it about that that made it so exciting?	
170	P: I think I remember going, we went to the same shop we got her primary school	
171	uniform in and I remember looking, I know it was a really funny experience 'cos she	
172	stood in the same, the shop hadn't changed at all in 7 years, you know it was the same	
173	staff, you know and she stood in the same little changing room and I remember	
174	thinking 'ooh do you remember when you put on your little *PRIMARY SCHOOL*	
175	uniform, now you're in your *SECONDARY SCHOOL* uniform' and it was quite a rite of	

loss of
child with
rowing up.

excitement
evidence
of child

loss of child

~~excitement~~
~~evidence~~

evidence
of child

painful XP of child starting secondary
 sense of loss of child - like a piece has been
 ripped out? physical vs emotional
 XP is only once
 feeling of emptiness/sadness now XP is over?
 nothing to look forward to?
 bitter sweet
 parents more emotional than child
 excited for child - mix of emotions
 use friends to justify her feeling of loss?
 scared of losing ~~the~~ child
 ready for more - ambivalence?
 emphasise positive feelings with
 repetition.
 uniform - represent identity of child.
 happy when speaking - holding on to past
 uniform change - represents a change
 rite of passage. of identity -
 growing up

parental anxiety	176	passage you know and that was, that was lovely. Um, but I'm not brilliant at startings	recognition of own difficulties
	177	and endings but once we did it, it's been ok. But yeah I think I was a bit worried about	with transition - ambivalence sense
	178	ending primary and I was a bit worried about how she would be about that but again,	
	179	there were, you know there were some tears and obviously some upset but you know	actually to vindicate surprise
surprise at child's response	180	she's actually coped. She's made me realise she's probably coped better than I	cope better than expected - did she assume
	181	thought she would.	child would be worried as her? lack of awareness of child's resilience?
	182	I: Good. Why do you think you thought she would cope less well than she has?	
	183	P: Why didn't I think that she would and? I think she needs an awful lot of nurturing	questioning self - bring back to reality
	184	and it was probably only about Year 6 when she would let me, not let me, she would	see child as needing support
	185	still want me to dress her. I didn't want to but she would still look for and seek for that	
loss of child with growing up	186	and I was still putting her hair up when she first went to secondary and I was thinking	is she wanting child to grow up but
	187	'my goodness, is she ever going to do this for herself' but I've noticed a real change	also still be her 'little girl' - relationship
	188	um, I can give you a very concrete example actually, of maturity, in the sense that	with child will change in secondary?
	189	*CHILD's NAME* can't get rid of anything. She's always kept hold of clothes, toys, but	internal conflict?
	190	just yesterday the Barbies, I said 'can we get rid of the Barbies and she went 'ok' and	change in maturity
	191	she actually bought down some old cheap jewellery, plastic jewellery that she said we	↳ contradiction with "puzzled XP" we 155.
surprise at child's response	192	could rid of this too. Now <u>that is an absolute first</u> . And I think going to secondary has	astonishment?
	193	made her grow up a little bit.	
	194	I: What's helped her to grow up a little bit?	
	195	P: I think being around more older, you know, they're not the oldest, they're the	being with older pupils as a tve
	196	youngest again so I think seeing older children. Um like she knows Father Christmas	
	197	isn't real and one of her friends, bless them, had said to the teacher 'I got my letter'	
	198	and she said everyone was sort of bullying them and I said 'oh you know', we talk	
	199	about magic Christmas, <u>still believe in magic Christmas</u> , but I think she was glad that	still holding on as only got one child (loss)
	200	that wasn't her and it could have been her you know 6 months ago really, a year ago.	
	201	So I think just being around older children, different expectations maybe of teachers,	secondary expectations as tve

	202	has sort of pulled her up a little bit. I get the impression she'll always want us to baby	want us to baby her? parent wanting
	203	her, it's just like an unmet need really in some ways, whereas at school, she, I know she	to keep hold of young child?
expectations	204	presents differently at school without a doubt, um that's part of the problem, but I	
	205	thought that she might um, lag behind a bit more. I thought she'd lose everything, that	different at school.
surprise at	206	was, she's quite a scattered child, she makes me quite scattered, and, um, there have	losing things
child's	207	been times she's remembered things which is good so I think she's grown up a little bit.	surprise that child has coped
response	208	I: Ok, good. So you said she presents differently at school what do you mean by that?	
professional	209	P: Well I had wondered, on occasions, I'd wondered whether she's mildly a girl on the	hesitant wondering
identity as	210	spectrum, I have wondered about that because she does do a lot of masking. She	social interactions skills - understanding
source of	211	would have masked for you I'm sure as well today. Um but she, so for example, um she	of world influenced by professional identity
knowledge	212	has a CAMHS appointment, an initial assessment coming up because with homework,	homework - major impact on whole family
idiotic	213	which is why I said I'd park that and come back to it, she's had head banging and	
impact on	214	everything and it's been really intense. I know no kids like homework <u>but it is and then</u>	
family	215	<u>some</u> , you know, it's just <u>off the scale</u> sometimes. She's always been avoidant with	child avoid work - almost overwhelmed by
	216	work. She definitely sees school home absolutely separate, doesn't like it when they,	home school separate child's reaction
	217	when they cross over at all. Um, but yeah she's really, she has struggled a lot with that	
	218	and I think school sometimes think, they, because I've got this, I should probably say	
	219	for the tape, it's the same special needs coordinator at the secondary as it was in	
	220	primary because person's changed their job, and they never really believed there was	SENCO relationship - impacted parent
valued as	221	an issue at primary school even though we would see everything getting lost, um I	school never believed there was an issue
parent expect	222	mean you sit down there, that's where she sits to do her homework, I mean, any	losing things does she have a lack of faith
	223	distraction in the garden, it can go on for three hours, a 10 minute homework can take	in school? that & as if her knowledge re child
	224	three hours. And it <u>dominates</u> our entire weekend, you know we've tried everything,	is not valued?
speculation	225	<u>you know being a psychologist, I have got some skills up my sleeve</u> , we've tried bribery,	tried everything - sense of desperation.
responsibility	226	we've tried shouting, we've tried nurturing, we've tried saying don't bother, you know	does she feel she should know what to
professional	227	we've tried absolutely everything but it never changes, it's always just a <u>real slog</u> , you	do b/c of her profession?
de as a	228	know to get her to do that and I personally think she holds onto a lot of the stress that	Real slog
source of			holds on to stress from school
existence &			
knowledge			

229	school creates in her and lets it out at home. <u>And I just don't understand that at her</u>	questioning own lack of understanding.
230	school.	
231	I: What impact does that have on you?	
232	P: It's exhausting, it is really tiring and I feel tired quite a lot. Um, I was saying to my	find it exhausting + tiring - impacts are harsh
233	husband actually yesterday that I think if we didn't do the jobs we did and we didn't	recognition of own job - searching
234	know some of the stuff we know, I'm sure, I know people that have separated from	for own source of resilience
235	partners where that's you know, been the case but I think we do, and that's why I	
236	pushed for a CAMHS assessment because I think I've micromanaged so much for her	micromanaged for child
237	that actually I want to step back now and say 'look this is what happens if I don't do it	want to step back - "pushed"
238	all' <u>because if I didn't do what I did, I wouldn't be doing that; I'd just be a normal</u>	influence of own job - questions around
239	<u>parent, if that makes sense!</u> But yeah I think you know I do I do wonder about	identity - parent vs. professional - feel like having
240	relationships as well. It's really hard because I don't, I know she's made friends, I don't	to be a professional/caring for child as job?
241	know any of these youngsters and when we gave *CHILD'S NAME* a phone, we were	friendship worries
242	quite late to give her a phone, we didn't want her to have one too early, so she only	phone - independence
243	got it in June when she was um 11, partly because she's got to travel to school and I	bus journey worries
244	wanted her to have it for that and one of the conditions of having a phone was that I	
245	do random checks. She's fine with that. I want to see what's going on, she's not on	phone checks - is this her struggling to
246	WhatsApp or anything, and sometimes when I read the messages with her friends, I do	let go & allow child to grow up?
247	think 'hmm' but then it's so difficult because I'm so much older than them I don't, you	
248	know, it's trying to understand how they message each other, but quite often she	worried about social interactions - centrality
249	messages and doesn't get a response back but then you could look at it as she's not on	of the friendships to school XP for parent.
250	WhatsApp where they don't use their data, it costs them data so I always think oh	her perception of child influencing how she
251	maybe they don't want to respond because they don't want to use their data. You	thinks child copes with secondary?
252	know, so, but or is that <u>you know she's a bit needy and overwhelming to them</u> so I	repetition of 'I don't know' - worried by the
253	don't know, so I don't really, as far as I'm concerned she seems happy enough but I	fact she doesn't know what's happening?
254	don't know sometimes if some of the things that leak out at home could be to do with	
255	friendships, I don't know 'cos I don't know the kids so I think <u>some of the stresses,</u>	

expectations	256	mostly academic at school, but could be social as well. It's got to be, the first term is	contradiction to line 134? - justify to self
	257	always going to be difficult for everyone I suppose, yeah.	tails off
	258	I: And what support have the secondary school put in place to help her both socially	
	259	and academically to settle in?	
parent relationship with school as central to xp.	260	P: Excuse me while I spit my coffee everywhere! Um, nothing, until we asked for a	humour
end of owing to true and battle	261	meeting. And I was loathed to ask for a meeting because I obviously know the SENCO	had to ask for meeting - "loathed"
	262	and we do have a rocky relationship. But going back to what I said about the CAMHS	SENCO relationship - big impact on parents
	263	point, I thought well I'm sure other parents, I know, I know from other Mums I speak to	view of school?
	264	from the primary school they've already had meetings about similar things so I think oh	
	265	what am I hanging on for so I did ask for a meeting partly because she had, what in	ask for meeting - having to drive everything?
	266	*LOCAL AUTHORITY* we call an *INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN*, I think they call it	
	267	something different in *LOCAL AUTHORITY*, I can't remember what it's called. But she	
	268	hasn't got an EHCP but she did have an *INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN*, and I was	
is connect in school	269	thinking I've not heard anything even to say you might hear by January or February or	not heard from school - repeat - feeling cut off from school?
	270	we're rewriting it or we're not doing them. I had not heard a thing so I used that as a	
	271	reason to be in contact and I'm sure. I'm convinced other parents will have spoken to	
	272	you about pupil premium plus, I also wanted to know, I know it's not ring-fenced but I	pupil premium+ (legislative) - question school's understanding.
	273	wanted to know how it was being spent on *CHILD'S NAME*, partly because she was	
missing mental anxiety	274	coming home some days and saying 'oh I was taken out of geography today' and	
	275	sometimes with *CHILD'S NAME* you can't work out what she means. She's quite like,	view of child's skills etc.
	276	and sometimes what she says bares no relation to reality or sometimes it does but I	liking to be included - need to be involved - not being met.
	277	also like to get the information from the source so from the teachers. I'm not one of	repeat 'one of those parents' - consider identity & role as a parent.
	278	those parents if my, one of those, yeah, one of those parents that if my child says 'oh	
	279	the teacher's told us we ought to do this', I like to clarify that 'cos otherwise you're	
	280	only getting their perception. So I started to work out what is all this coming out of	
questioning self	281	lessons all about and also how's she catching up on the lessons she's missed so I used	finding a reason to have meeting
as she	282	that to say could we have a meeting 'cos there was nothing until that point. Even, I'll	jumping between 2 ideas
minimisation	283	come back to something they did do while she was in primary though. Um, so we had	

one of having
drive and
bottle

one of
saying to
drive and
bottle

professional
is parent

being
included in
school
community
scouting

284 our meeting and I was able to clarify some things at that but other than that, I can tell
285 you about that in a minute. But going back to primary, I asked to have an additional
286 visit where someone from um, the primary school that she identified that she liked
287 from the care team came with us and we met her head of year. So her head of year,
288 they're like non-teaching, they're pastoral staff, I guess they are heads of year, team-
289 year team leaders they're called, they don't teach. So, she knew *CHILD'S NAME*. So
290 the school did let us go do an extra visit if you see what I mean, and they were quite
291 good with her. The year team leader showed *CHILD'S NAME* around and um, just
292 chatted to her so that was about an hour visit. But going back, um, to the meeting we
293 had, that was with the SENCo and what they call a 'progress leader'. Again I don't know
294 what they are or what they do. Um, I guess they look at the data and make sure they're
295 and, it was vaguely helpful I suppose. They met, I don't know, I just find it really
296 difficult because they don't get it, so you're banging on a very firmly locked door and
297 you know at one point, I'd said about pupil premium, they said, they started to say we
298 don't do that here and I said no you will do that here. They said 'no, no we don't, we
299 don't, not that much, we don't do that, it's £400'. I said 'no no, because she's
300 previously looked after, you will do that', I said I can send you and I don't normally
301 throw my weight around but at that point, my husband's be like 'rrr', I thought no I will
302 send them the guidance and they, they were very good, they were very quick actually
303 at responding which is good. They did come back the next day and say 'no you're quite
304 right, she'll now have', she was having extra English, she passed her English SATs
305 though so I couldn't work that out but she was now going to have extra Maths as well.
306 So have they been helpful, yes they've let us have meetings, yes, they're pretty quick,
307 much quicker than primary to get back, they're very responsive by email which the
308 primary never was, um they've had a meeting with us, I feel like I've had to drive it all
309 but yeah, yeah, they've done that.

310 I: How is your relationship with the secondary school been?

jumping back again - trying to work out
which is more important to tell?

school staff - relationships are important
for child to settle in for parents

prep for secondary

jumping back again

school staff relationships

communicating self it was helpful

staff don't get it - difficult - frustration
pupil premium knowledge - sense of impossible
challenge in getting staff to understand.

having to be forceful
aware of impact of professional identity
quick response from school - meets a
need to be included

been helpful

drive it all - aware of role - if it wasn't
tail off for her nothing would happen?

on her response &
how staff see her -
not able to be a
normal parent?

<p>arent SENCo relationship is central to reference</p>	<p>311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331</p>	<p>P: I almost can't have this conversation without thinking about that SENCo. I just, I've got to own it, I don't like the woman, I think she's a very dangerous SENCo, I think she's in the wrong job, I think she's very aggressive with people who are potentially quite vulnerable as parents. Um, there's a lot of power and control issues which I've never had with anyone else that's ever been involved with my child. So it's really hard for me to not let that cloud it but if I was to push her to one side, oh I'd love to push her to one side [laughter], sorry, that's not very professional! But, putting her to one side, the other teachers have been fair, they have responded to anything I've raised, which has only been once or twice, it's not, I'm not on the phone every week. I think twice in the whole term, one was the meeting I've just mentioned and one, it was actually the year team leader, I can't think, I think it might have been the pupil premium again. I think it must have been, I can't think why I was in touch with her originally. But they, they're respectfully responsive in an efficient way. But I wouldn't say they've gone above and beyond. There's certainly nothing which has made me think they get the needs of children who are adopted as needing any extra looking out for or support. I did telephone in the summer term of year 6, the designated teacher for looked after children, I think, I think that person just wears that hat to be honest. I don't think they really got what I was getting at. I've never had anything to do with her or heard of her since. So which, that's okay, maybe that's the way they do their systems but you know, it's not like it's a hands on school that um, I've been impressed with how they deal with children who are adopted. They treat them like everyone else.</p>	<p>centrality of SENCo relationship to feelings re school</p> <p>SENCo relationship - emotional - recognise explicitly stating dislike</p> <p>role of professionals with child</p> <p>aware of impact of SENCo relationship</p> <p>use of humour to illustrate dislike</p> <p>staff relationships as helpful - feel included and valued as parent</p> <p>pupil premium</p> <p>lack of understanding of needs of adopted cyp - feel as if a neglected group - do staff see adoption as a fix which negates any early issues?</p> <p>lack of staff relationship</p> <p>see adopted cyp as everyone else.</p>
<p>332</p>	<p>I: Well my question was gonna be, do you think they understand?</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>
<p>let down by school</p>	<p>333 334 335 336 337</p>	<p>P: <u>No</u>, that they wouldn't have let you do the research at the school the fact that we're sitting here doing this in my kitchen and not at school says absolutely everything in my opinion. I think it's quite embarrassing for them. Um, no. They weren't quite as bad at primary but that might be because at primary I had more contact with them as mums and dads tend to. I remember once, I'm harking back, this probably isn't relevant, but I remember the Year 1 teacher that's the only other teacher I've ever had an issue with;</p>	<p>firm answer of no - sense of frustration, anger - lack of staff understanding - <i>forceful</i> -</p> <p>comparison to primary systems</p>
<p>one school relationships</p>	<p>338</p>	<p></p>	<p>relationships with staff - central - impact of Yr1 teacher on all future staff relationships</p>

	339	believe you me I've got on brilliantly with all the rest! She'd said to me adoption isn't	humour - recognise
	340	an excuse once when I was trying to explain why *CHILD'S NAME* needs more	awareness of child's needs / support.
	341	processing time and you know why she, they always would say to me she talks too	attachment needs
	342	much, and my hypothesis is that she needs the connection and she's chatting 'cos she	
	343	wants you to notice her, and give her a little stroke and then she will get on with her	
	344	work. That is actually the case I think with her. But that teacher didn't understand it	teacher didn't understand - sense of feeling
	345	and you know, that was quite difficult, um, although weirdly she really liked that	devalued as parent who should be
	346	teacher; one of her favourites. So I thought they didn't understand it at primary and	expert in child - not feeling heard.
	347	they were quite open about not understanding it <u>actually</u> . Here we were told by the	open at ^{not} understanding - almost refreshing
	348	Local Authority that the school were brilliant with children in care, we deliberately	consideration of local area.
	349	picked them, they're not the most academic school in the area. Um, we wanted a big	parent wanting inclusion
	350	comprehensive dynamic school where she'd be quite included, it was very inclusive	
let down by school	351	and it is- and I'd say that's, I've got no reason to, to doubt that but do they understand	staff understanding
	352	that specific niche? No, are there many children that are adopted? I know two already	Lack of first hand knowledge of school -
	353	you know so and I think it's, weirdly her primary and this secondary I happen to know	draw on LA information to justify choice
	354	are the schools that have the most children in care in *LOCAL AUTHORITY*. So, they	expectations of school
chief that adoption is unrecognized	355	probably should, and maybe some teachers do and I've just not met them yet but no,	reasoning
	356	I've had no reason to think that they are any more inclusive than anyone else would be	tail off
	357	or even exclusive so yeah.	
	358	I: So a bit of an up and down kind of relationship with the school?	
centrality of home-school relationship	359	P: If it hadn't been that SENCo I wouldn't have a beef probably, but just by virtue of	SENCo relationship
	360	what's happened with this research I was really <u>angry</u> you know there was part of me	anger at SENCo/school response to research
	361	that thought I wanted to go to the head and say we chose this school based on good	
	362	faith that you were going to be really inclusive and supportive and actually at the very	let down by school - expectations not met
let down by school	363	first hurdle I feel really disappointed and let down. But I think there's past history there	
	364	which I think is affecting that relationship which is why I have to be quite, I didn't go	conscious of self getting too involved - identifying
	365	back to school about anything to do with this 'cos I thought do you know what there's,	as a parent & how perceived by school -
	366	I'll let this one go. But yeah I would say a bit up and down I think *HUSBAND'S NAME*	

367	as well was a bit disappointed we haven't had a parents evening yet, I think that's very	parents evening - communication with sch. feel excluded.
368	long, it's in April, I think that's a very long time for your child to start school and not	
369	meet anyone, um, but obviously we made that meeting happen so we have met	
370	people and it was quite reassuring but <u>what's good enough for me is she seems ok, and</u>	child seems ok - parent ok
371	<u>if she's ok then I am ok. Yeah.</u>	yeah - confirming her comment to herself - not sure if accurate thought.
372	I: Is there anything that they could have done, either primary or secondary could have	
373	done, to support that transition or that starting?	
374	P: I don't know if she said, the primary school again I had to ask, I would do a lot of the	feeling like driving - see as her job
375	driving I had to <u>put the flea in someone's ear</u> , but she was part of a transition group at	put the flea in someone's ear - metaphor rebuttal - if not forceful then nothing gets done.
376	primary school that made a lovely big book with artwork in it and things like that and	
377	her primary school 'cos it's quite <u>um a</u> , well the EP for this area when I said where my	um - recognition of local area - use to justify concerns?
378	daughter was going, she said 'oooo tough catchment' so they do have a care team in	
379	her primary school but they, we chose her primary actually because it was one of the	
380	first schools in the country to have extended services, and they had social workers who	role of staff/professionals with child & relationships - attachment as key
381	were part of the care team so the lady down there that ran the care team had a really	
382	good relationship with *CHILD'S NAME*, um, did put her into this transition group, it	
383	was like 6 weeks, and was the person that came on the additional visit with us. What	
384	could the secondary have done differently? I felt we had to <u>push quite hard</u> on the	push quite hard - sense of despair felt school should have done more felt school should have been involved pupil premium
385	door to have that additional visit, I think they should have swept them up as part of the	
386	vulnerable group anyway. And I think they should have been in touch with me,	
387	particularly as I had said to the year team leader about the pupil premium, I would	
388	want to know more about that when she starts. We've never had an *INDIVIDUAL	
389	EDUCATION PLAN*, <u>nothing</u> , I, I rang, I think actually that's why I contacted the year	lack of contact with school, 'nothing' as emphasis sense of despair
390	team leader, do you remember earlier I said I couldn't remember why, that was why I	
391	was saying, I wasn't sure if it would carry on at secondary and when they passed me	
392	over to the SEN department, they said we are a very big school. I mean, I wasn't that	
393	impressed with this professionally actually, as they were a very big school you won't	not impressed with school communication hopes of inclusive school not met
394	expect to get anything back because we do our EHCP kids first, you won't expect to	

discerned from school	395	hear anything until Christmas and we haven't and that was a bit hmm, ok they just	is she confused about why they haven't had lack of school contact
	396	didn't seem very proactive or preventative so they could have done that they could	contact?
	397	have had us in for *INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN* planning meetings, they could have	comparison with other schools
	398	had a, I know *ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL* have a meet the tutors where it's	wish to have had more contact
	399	literally, it's almost like cheese and wine night, you just go in but it would have been	expectations of school not met
analysed as a parent	400	nice just to, to meet them, um, and I think maybe just have reached out a bit more	feel unrecognised & ignored.
	401	given that she's a disadvantaged group.	
	402	I: How would those sorts of things changed your experience?	
it down	403	P: I would have felt heartened and gladdened, because primary I did a lot of 'no you do	would have felt positive - lack of confidence
	404	need to do this, no you do need to do that, you know can we do this, can we do that',	driving at primary ^{is recognised} in school to recognise
	405	you know I did a lot of- I wasn't a pushy parent but we had, we had a therapist for a	child's needs + support
	406	while when she was doing some life story and he said to me you, to me, he said you	
	407	need to be a friendly nuisance he said you're not actually doing enough so because of	friendly nuisance - reassurance seeking
drive and be battle	408	our job you don't want them labelled, you don't you know, you just wanna be the	recognition of our job & impact on approach
she is identity as a parent	409	critical friend, I was being very friendly and actually after a while I just thought, no that	always wearing professional hat
	410	is, I'm going to be a friendly nuisance, so I was a friendly nuisance and I was hoping at	awareness of self role - very reflective
	411	secondary, I knew it'd be different, because you don't have as much hands on like I	comparison with primary systems
	412	said, you don't have the contact, so I was hoping they might take up that baton a bit	asking for meeting - sense of being let down
it down	413	but I don't feel that happened given that I then had to ask for the meeting. The	service relationship
not as professional	414	meeting was 25 minutes long which I personally would allow an hour for a meeting	humour
devalued as a parent	415	with a parent and the SENCo at 25 minutes while I was still talking, I was in the middle	negative experience with SENCo. - major
	416	of talking, the, the progress leader had asked me a question, she just got up [laughing]	impact on perception of school.
	417	and went to leave. So I said, 'oh, right, right ok we're obviously done'. So it was all just	
	418	a bit odd, you know.	
centrality of home school relationship	419	I: How did you feel when that happened?	

parent vs.
professional

as a
parent as
an adoptive
parent

it down

belief that
adoption
is unrecog-
nised

420 P: Not surprised, kind of not, I was, no, it's, it's not a surprise, it's very much in keeping
421 with my experience at primary. I did say, I mean I would start a meeting by saying 'oh
422 we've got half an hour you know so this is what we can expect to do' and yeah, well
423 what did it result in, it resulted in *CHILD'S NAME* getting extra Maths help so in the
424 end I suppose it worked. But I do, I hate feeling like I'm being a pain in the arse, I don't
425 like that feeling but I feel like I constantly have to be a bit 'eh eh eh' for them to
426 actually do anything and by them I'm probably talking more about primary but low and
427 behold, my experience of secondary has been quite similar. You know I was quite
428 disappointed when you know it hasn't been a problem for any other SENCos to do the
429 research at school, you know there was no flexibility around can we do it at the end of
430 the day, could do it at lunch time, you know can we miss one of her extra maths
431 lessons for that, that that was a bit gutting actually. But don't worry, it's not, it's
432 nothing to do with this research, it's not your fault, it's not a surprise to me either
433 though.

434 I: In what sense?

435 P: Because the SENCo is who she is and I think you know she, there's a whole back
436 story with her and her life there and her child's got quite complex special needs and I
437 think, my personal belief is that she thinks because *CHILD'S NAME*'s adopted and it
438 all happened years ago, it shouldn't be a problem whereas her child has ongoing
439 complex special needs, she's in mainstream but you know I won't say more 'cos it's her
440 life, but I get the impression that unless you look visibly like you have a special need
441 then you don't have one is my personal belief. I think there's a lot of that going on, it's
442 quite personal.

443 I: Have your thoughts and feelings changed as you've gone across the term? You said
444 that you were possibly more nervous than she was at the beginning, how do you feel
445 and how do you think about secondary school now that we've had a term?

disappointed it wasn't a surprise

says not surprised & then takes some time
to see if accurately captures feelings
senco relationship as negative
recognition of own job - not seen as separate

don't like feeling pushy - something is happening
feel like have to push, that seems like a constant
battle.
almost seems unsurprised, disappointment

school ~~not~~ /senco not allowing research
as negative - sense of despair at
their response

galled about school's response - chose school
not surprised by senco response due to
invisibility -
feel let down
by school

senco relationship as negative
attempt to see other perception

*school see adoption as fix

hidden needs in adopted children are
not understood by staff - SEN is a
visible thing.

acknowledge complexity of relationship

managing overall anxiety	446	P: Err, I suppose it ebbs and flows. I, if I don't get reached out to by a school there's a	er - unsure - give self thinking time
	447	bit of a cycle for me actually. If I don't get a reaching out pattern, what happens is my	comm with school as affecting parent
	448	anxiety goes up goes up then I become a <u>friendly nuisance</u> , have my meeting and it	anxiety - attempt to justify role.
	449	goes down again. So I imagine at some point it's gonna go back up again, if I'm honest,	
	450	I don't think it's just going to stay flat lined. Um, because I don't always feel there is	
disconnect from school	451	quite enough contact and that for me would probably be once a term, it probably	feeling of a lack of contact - feel cutoff
	452	wouldn't need to be more than that. Um, but I think you know overall I feel, my anxiety	& struggle to manage that?
	453	was about her starting, I just wanted her to get some friends and not be billy no mates	importance of child having friendships - give
	454	on her own in the canteen you know, and I was, and we've had some quite rocky	child a sense of belonging
anxiety re social belonging	455	experiences actually this term. You probably aren't aware because you're not local but	local area context & possible impacts
	456	the first thing that happened, and <u>there is some relevance here</u> I think, is that school	justify it to self why sharing.
	457	hit the headlines, <u>it sounds funny</u> , I suppose it is funny, it's not really, they had a rat	thinking it through
	458	invasion [laughing] and someone had videoed the rats in the girl's loo, so of course it	humour - used b/c she is embarrassed that
	459	hit the headlines, it was all over the *LOCAL NEWS*, they'd had building work so it's	school has had such problems when it
	460	<u>cold, rats come into the warm</u> , I wasn't bothered about that, but she, when she went	was picked as vicarious + popular?
	461	to guides, some of her friends said 'oh you don't go to a very clean school' and things	language to justify the rat incident to self
	462	like that and I could tell some of the mums were thrilled that this had happened to the	
	463	school they couldn't get their kids into, but we could get *CHILD'S NAME* into 'cos she	
	464	was adopted, they loved that. So that, <u>that was kind of amusing</u> , you know, she didn't	
	465	like them saying it wasn't a clean school, but we said you know it's cold outside and	
	466	rats come in and it's - so she was able to say to her friends it's building works. That was	
questioning mental decision/ excessive rumination	467	dealt with, then literally the week later, and you may have heard this I don't know, a	
	468	Year 8 girl stabbed another Year 8 girl on the school site. Now that was a bit stressful	local context as stressful - questioning
	469	'cos I was thinking, 'oh god where have we chosen', but then you think, do you know	decisions made as parent - could I
	470	what, that could happen anywhere where there's large groups of kids, you know, so	have chosen somewhere better?
	471	again because of the jobs we do, we were able to talk ourselves off the ceiling but I	recognition of our job & increased
professional identity as a source of resilience & knowledge	472	think for some parents they might have been a bit like 'god where have we sent our	resilience / source of resilience.
	473	kids'. One of her friends was beaten up and it was videoed as well so she's had a few	
	474	you know, potentially unsettling experiences, but I think I feel less anxious because	child's resilience is reassuring for her.
	475	she's just, it's gone [gesture over her head] a little bit, so for me that's reassured me a	take vicarious to see child is ok.
managing overall anxiety through child's response			

476	bit that some of these potential triggers that could have been big things. I mean she	does she feel these things would have impacted her had she been the child?
477	could have become a school refuser over the stabbing, you know but she, she hasn't	
478	and she's just managed it and it's not really any of her business and she's not bothered	
479	so that makes me in turn feel more reassured I think and she really likes some of her	reassured by child's response
480	teachers. I don't know what she's said but she really likes *TEACHER NAME*, who's her	teacher relationships are positive attachment & belonging
481	Spanish teacher and she likes her form tutor so there's some teachers she's identified	
482	that she really really likes and I don't think she's got anyone that she particularly	
483	dislikes in her teaching, in the teaching that she has. And there's a couple of subjects	
484	that [inaudible] but she seems to quite like her subjects too so we feel she's swimming	child's reaction influences parent reaction - take confidence from child to alleviate own worries.
485	along ok and that makes us feel ok.	
486	I: Yeah, and what's helped you to manage your feelings towards secondary school?	
487	P: Yeah, it sounds so ironic, but I think having the same SENCo, at least I haven't had to	SENCo relationship as positive - ensured continuity - almost conflicted by SENCo - ambivalent - confusing for her?
488	try and build a relationship, I haven't had to think 'is this going to happen again, oh no	
489	it has' because it is just a continuation of the same relationship. If it was a positive	
490	relationship, it would've been absolutely brilliant but it is a tricky relationship so at	
491	least I haven't had to worry about that and it go wrong because it hasn't, it is what it is,	SENCo is important to her - almost distracts her from question - ask again
492	um, and what was the question again sorry?	external conflict around SENCo.
493	I: What has helped you to manage your experience and your feelings towards	
494	secondary?	
495	P: Ok well I knew that person would be a key person, the SENCo whoever that was, not	SENCo relationship
496	the designated teacher so much, it's always been the SENCos we've liaised with so I	
497	knew I wasn't gonna have to establish that relationship so in some ways it was a bit of	
498	a relief. And I think um, seeing that she copes with the bus journey, that's been a really	bus journey as a worry. seeing child's response influences parent - child's resilience as influential
499	big thing because, I took my mother-in-law last Friday she was here and *CHILD'S	
500	NAME* stays with them once a month and I said 'oh, drive down 'cos you can see	recognition of local area - very aware
501	where she goes to school', she said 'oh it's quite a long drive isn't it, that must be quite	

<p>reference questioning parental decision surprise at child's response</p>	<p>502 a long bus journey' and then weirdly the therapist that was doing life story work with 503 *CHILD'S NAME*, it's a long story, he's a running coach at the running club *CHILD'S 504 NAME* goes to just over the road, and he said to me, he caught up with me and he 505 said 'oh where did she go in the end?', he said 'oh that's quite a long journey'. So' I've 506 had a lot of 'oh it's quite a long journey'. And I'm thinking 'oh it is quite a long journey' 507 but she's <u>actually</u> managed that and she's never got a bus before so I think just that 508 coping with I think what a lot of parents would worry about has been, and it is, it's not 509 the nicest walk down there, it's often dark but she's managed that, you know I can see 510 she's finding her feet, homework is hideous, um, but also they have been responsive, 511 they're pretty good by email, you know the year team leaders I think are meant to be 512 there as a key person I think for parents as well as the kids so I do feel there is a clear 513 channel of communication and what she then does is 'right I've sent that off to the 514 various people, I'll expect them to get back to you', sometimes they do, sometimes 515 they don't, there's an element of chasing but at least you're not left completely in the 516 dark going, you know I don't know what's going on so I do think that works quite well. 517 Um, I know it sounds daft 'cos it's nothing to do with *CHILD'S NAME* at all but little 518 things, I mean I suppose, <u>maybe it is interesting for your research</u>, they tweet quite a 519 lot and all the departments tweet so that's quite nice, it gives you and they always 520 seem really proud of the kids, you know and I know it's all social media, so it's all 521 bullshit probably but you know, there is, they don't have to do that, the primary never 522 did. You know, they've had like a school show and they said how proud they were and 523 it's just generally a nice feel I think in the little bit that I see and I suppose when I drop 524 her off at school, I mean I haven't seen any stabbings [laughter], kids seem to be alright 525 going in! I do get to see the environment you know 'cos a lot of people don't drop their 526 kids off you know, hopefully at some point she'll get the bus and we won't have to do 527 that but yeah they seem, the kids seem to go in alright, there's no argy-bargy that I see 528 on a daily basis which is reassuring, so yeah.</p>	<p>why is that weird? over concern with what others think?</p> <p>influence of others 'actually' - surprised? bus journey worries → cope well</p> <p>recognition of local area as not good homework - impact on family as a whole is all consuming</p> <p>good communication from school</p> <p>some chasing school - want to feel she still has a role to play in school despite child growing up embarrassed?</p> <p>tweets from school ethos of school - ^{seeking} confirmation of view it's comparison to primary ^{an average} school</p> <p>Laughter on a difficult subject</p> <p>bus - increased independence ^{done} hopes reassuring.</p>
<p>feeling included in the school community containing</p>	<p>529 I: What is it about the social media presence that's quite important to you?</p>	
<p>nanzi's anxiety</p>		

being
included in
school
community

530	P: It's weird isn't it, I don't know why I mentioned that. I suppose it's because, um, it's	why weird? small things have big impact to reassur
531	more immediate than a newsletter, you don't get a lot of newsletters. And I suppose at	surprised she mentioned it - unaware.
532	secondary you don't get, I suppose that little bit of insight, there's sometimes photos	communication as important
533	and things like that and I don't go on it a lot, I don't go on twitter very much actually	
534	but I probably go on about once a week and what I've realised and why it is important	feeling like she knows what's going on
535	is sometimes there's messages to parents that are on there more than any of the other	
536	systems so I didn't know there was a Christmas dinner for example because they	
537	tweeted about it, I didn't read it so I realised and said to my husband that actually we	
538	probably do need to check that more regularly but I think it's just...what's important	revisiting the question to refocus - really
539	about it...I suppose it gives you an insight that you wouldn't normally get through a	thinking about topic.
540	newsletter and it's sort of giving you a way in to look at things that isn't just your	
541	child's eyes I suppose, it's not just her perception, I know it's my perception of what	perception - a way of her feeling included
542	I'm looking at but yeah I just think, I like the fact that a lot of the departments do it, it's	
543	quite proactive, it's always about how brilliantly the kids have done, it just feels really	
544	positive. <u>I like that, so yeah.</u>	confirming to self. - internal thinking about self?
545	I: Makes a difference, sounds like it's made a difference.	
546	P: Yeah I'm surprised I mentioned it to you actually.	surprise at self.
547	I: You've mentioned it a couple of times actually.	
548	P: Yeah 'cos it must be something that it was something I hadn't realised, that's	time to reflect, intra psychic processes
549	interesting isn't it. Yeah normally you know what's important and you're ready to say	change in her views towards school
550	but yeah it has come up a couple of times hasn't it, yeah.	& self.
551	I: Um, the other thing is the designated teacher; you've mentioned a couple of times,	
552	both primary and secondary that they were, that was a label on a member of staff.	

disconnect
from school
role &
identify as
an adoptive
parent

orient us
professional
separation
elief that
adoption is
recognized

sense of
love and
belonging

553	P: The primary one was different, I had probably forgotten actually to say that the	
554	primary designated teacher was the lady who was the head of the care team so she	
555	was a non-qualified teacher but she was a social worker and, err, she was always pretty	comparison to primary school systems other professionals involved
556	good actually. Um, yeah, and secondary, I've had no dealings with them other than a	lack of involvement with secondary.
557	telephone call I made where I think they were a bit 'why are you ringing me', I was a bit	
558	embarrassed, I was a bit like 'oh maybe I shouldn't have done that'. I think they're	awareness of how she comes across to staff - self awareness
559	probably the deputy as well and things like that.	
560	I: What do you think about them not really having any insight into adopted, looked	
561	after and previously looked after children?	
562	P: They may have brilliant insight into looked after children, I often find that's the case,	
563	that they see that as their work and you know they may know about that. But still I	
564	find, I don't want to mess my professional hat with my parental hat, but generally my	
565	experience is they <u>still don't get that</u> it's to do with previously looked after children	school staff unaware of adopted cyp almost accepting it won't change
566	and that hasn't changed at the school she's at. Um, I feel like I've had to go, I never say	align to looked after - battle/techniques to get staff to listen & understand
567	adopted, I say previously looked after which is interesting, 'cos I feel like I'm trying to	pupil premium - being pushy
568	align her to looked after children, I had to make quite, um, a fuss at that meeting about	
569	pupil premium because, <u>this might be relevant actually</u> , the, when I first rang the year	
570	team leader about the pupil premium, she sent that email saying 'I'll send all your	
571	queries out to people and they'll come back to me' and I had a phone call from, I think,	
572	I don't know who it was, it was a progress leader but it wasn't the same one I met in	
573	the meeting because it was a man, and he said, he was going round and round in	
574	circles about it being £400. I said no it's not, that's not what I mean, it's not £400, I'm	staff lack of knowledge of PP.
575	talking about pupil premium plus and he said 'oh I'll have to go back and clarify that'.	
576	And he never did come back to me actually which is one of the reasons I bought it up	
577	again at that meeting but that's an endless, you know frustration because I know it's	frustration around PP knowledge wearisome sense of battling, despair
578	not ring fenced to her but they do get money because of her and I found that a bit	irritating to have to be pushy
579	irritating that you know, I was having to you know go over the same thing again. I	negative of not speaking to right person
580	thought why am I not talking to the designated teacher, you know cut out the middle	

	581	man, and I can you know speak to someone who actually hopefully knows what is	
	582	what, so.	
	583	I: How does it feel having to drive, you're having to push it, you're having to say who	
	584	you need to speak to or want to speak to.	
parent vs. professional	585	P: It's really frustrating and it's <u>really really</u> difficult for me in the job that I do, I'll say,	frustrating at driving/repetition of
	586	do I need to say for the tape, I'm an educational psychologist, I'm a senior specialist for	<u>really to emphasise frustration</u>
	587	children in care and I find that, I find it really really challenging that I, wearing my	recognition of our job - identity crisis
	588	professional hat in *LOCAL AUTHORITY*, have quite a lot of influence, whereas over in	trying not to let blend
	589	this authority, and I, I don't want to go in and say 'oh I know this from work' 'cos who	not wanting to throw job role around
de & identity	590	wants to do that, you look like a <u>twonk</u> , no one wants to do that. It's a real power play	power is between parent & school
is our	591	and I don't want that relationship. I have been forced to do that and I haven't liked	wish to work collaboratively & frustrated when
adoptive	592	doing it so when we had that meeting, um, when they said 'oh you know, no I don't	not like having to force meeting ignored
parent	593	think we do that money here' and I said 'look I know from work you do' and I had to be	pupil premium.
valued as	594	quite firm about it and I don't ever do that and I don't really appreciate having to be	
- parent	595	pushed into that role, you know, and it's, I've found that personally a bit challenging,	personal challenge of driving.
(unable)	596	particularly because of the history with the SENCo, who'd once said to me 'you're an	SENCo relationship as negative - influence
re-school	597	EP, you should know what the matter is with your child'. That's never left me, that's	other staff relationships?
relationship as	598	really bruised me a bit actually 'cos she's my child, she's not my case study. So I felt like	job role vs parent - unable to be a parent?
central	599	I was having to do that again so <u>it's emotionally challenging, it's tiring, it's draining, it's</u>	living emotions - emphasise negativity
role & drive	600	annoying. There's nothing good about it. I mean, I can't, I can't lie, it's, it's a, you know	tremendous sense of difficulty + exhaustion
expectation	601	<u>if you want to know for your research</u> , I think it's the fact that adoptive parents are	difficulty articulating something emotive?
	602	often on their knees anyway, don't need this extra layer of grief, it's not our job, it isn't	
role &	603	our job. It's the school's job to know all this stuff and when they don't you end up	being an adoptive parent as a job
identity as	604	feeling like a pushy parent, you end up feeling more of a nuisance than a friendly	expectations of school not met
in adoptive	605	nuisance and that's not a headspace I am comfortable in. All I want to do is work with	
parent	606	my child's school, you know, I don't want to, I certainly don't want to make it difficult	not wanting to be pushy - want to
	607	for her, that's the last thing I would want to do which is why I left it with the school	work with school.
	608	about this research. You know I don't want to be angry and you know accusatory in all	School's response to research as -ve.
belief that			completely worn down by experience & lack of
adoption is			school knowledge - having to do take up a role
unrecognized			which isn't as a parent - what is it to be an adoptive
			parent?

holistic impacts
of adopting

responsibility
adoption
parent

responsibility

live +
batter

questioning
of self
examine
narrative

holistic
impact of
adopting

let down
by school

609 of this but it is, they're tiring kids, you asked me how I felt earlier and I said I'm
610 exhausted and this is just another, another thing I could do without. Bless my
611 husband's lovely but he's a busy teacher, like a lot of families, it does fall, seem to fall
612 to the mum, it's mum that tends to, I know it sounds sexist but, you know it does tend
613 to be that we, I have two jobs, I have my work job and then I have school, that's how it
614 felt at primary, it's not as bad at secondary but yeah it is an additional complication
615 that I'm sure all of us could do without.

616 I: What do you mean about school being a job?

617 P: Well having to drive things, well I could just go whatever I won't ever contact them,
618 you know but then she wouldn't have her extra maths tuition, you know and I think if,
619 she didn't pass her maths SATs so she does need that, you know she wouldn't have
620 that extra little bit of nurture or care, she wouldn't have been part of the transition
621 project, you know, but I don't know because I haven't got a crystal ball what would
622 have happened if she hadn't had those things but it is, sometimes it feels a bit, you
623 know, um, believe you me I spent a lot of time thinking is it me, I have spent a lot of
624 time navel gazing, thinking do I wind people up, have I got this wrong that I, I, I've got
625 plenty of feedback about other people's roles that is, I don't think it is but I also think a
626 lot of adopters have to be pushy, you know and I know, I'm sure that they think we're
627 neurotic and we go on about things but actually you know you do, I often use this
628 analogy at the *ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS*, that you know birth children
629 are apples and adopted children are onions, we're growing onions not apples, there's
630 more layers, there's more complexity, you know, it's, it's an interesting analogy and I
631 often think it's a bit like off-road parenting sometimes. You know like I said a lot of kids
632 don't like homework but they don't all smack their head on the wall repeatedly and
633 there have been a few things, she has reduced what she's eating and things like that,
634 which is why I gave her crisps earlier so there are signs of stress I think through
635 transition but you know, I think we can pinpoint what they are. But yeah I think it's just
636 a grief we don't, you know, it should be easier and it isn't.

holistic impact of adopting a child but
exhausted no one realising

feeling entirely responsible for child? - ^{eyes it +} ^{birth} ^{parents to}
school / adoptive parent role as job ^{do best} ^{thing for} ^{child?}
feels completely worn down

feeling like she has to take on role of
driver b/c staff don't understand

questioning of self - trying to establish
who she is, what she thinks, impact on others
self centred - lose wider context - absorbed
identity as an adoptive parent.

~~she~~ feel as if others have labelled her, ^{every}
how do others see her?

recognition of needs of adoptive cyp.
off road parenting
homework - holistic impact - feels
out of control

should be easier - feeling of letdown?

	637	I: What do you mean by off-road parenting exactly?	
role & identity as an adoptive parent	638	P: <u>Um, ok so, um, if she ever had to do a family tree at school or that kind of thing,</u>	thinking what to say.
	639	yeah, there's a lot of branches, it's like an orchard, um, contact comes up, um, so I'm	
	640	trying to think what the things we deal with that <u>you wouldn't have with an apple, I</u>	thinking time
	641	think you don't have a peer group of parents in the same way, you don't always want	identity as an adoptive parent - feel more isolated?
	642	other people to know, like I forget at work who knows she's adopted and who doesn't.	parent support as positive
	643	I think most people do, I'm lucky because I work with psychologists actually so most	
professional identity also aware of professional knowledge	644	people are very understanding. If I was in a different job and I didn't have that and I	public understanding of adoption -
	645	have got friends that, people can be ever so clumsy you know to both the child and the	life becomes defined by adoptive status??
	646	parent and so it's another layer that you've got to work with potentially. <u>I can't</u>	
	647	honestly say I've had that that much really, um, but you know some people's children	questioning the self / role as
	648	have anniversary responses and things like that and um, I'm not sure she does, there's	adoptive parent & child's needs -
	649	always questions like foetal alcohol, things like that you know, um, and I suppose there	on whether doing best - internal
	650	is some neuroticism if I'm being honest, you do think are there things that if she'd been	conflict sense?
resistive nomination	651	a birth child might not be there - I'm whispering because she's not very far away - you	whispering about it does she feel she shouldn't judge
	652	know and you think hmm, you know there are question marks sometimes, so her birth	
	653	parents both had statements, one went to an emotional difficulties school, one went	held on to last bit of childhood?
	654	to a learning difficulties school and you think where does that you know come into	recognise role as parent - <u>different</u>
use of ss & coming up	655	play, we haven't hit the teenage years yet when all that identity stuff kicks in but you	to birth child
	656	know we'll be there when it does. So I just think there's some extra layers sometimes	humour - b/c difficult topic
	657	that you have to, it's not such a clear road map which is why it's a bit off-road I think	
	658	[laughing].	
	659	I: It's a really interesting analogy.	
distinction of adoption	660	P: Yeah we talk about it a lot in the *ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS*, there's no	systems around adoptive families
	661	quite defined map. Which is why you need the things like health and education to be	

adoption as a journey	662	as clear cut as they can be, because then when your navigating all this stuff at least	navigating? — raising an adoptive child with as a journey with a range of obstacles to be get over, perhaps more obstacles than birth child?
	663	that's a consistent stable factor really.	
	664	I: And I guess the last thing, you mentioned that you try to align *CHILD'S NAME* with	
	665	previously looked after rather than adopted?	
espionage battle & drive	666	P: I never did that until very recently; yeah sorry you were gonna ask me a question.	justifying to self.
	667	I: All I was going to ask is where's that come from?	
	668	P: Yeah, I think partly because of the documentation says previously looked after and I	
	669	don't think schools would get what I mean if I said adopted. I, I think I have to use that	
refined by adoption	670	language sometimes 'cos if I think I say adopted I have to go 'oh you do know I mean	lack of school understanding strategies to win the battle? despair has led to taking approach? pupil premium using language that gets school to take notice the child is the child - parent doesn't want the 'adoption' to define her. ↳ child & family identity primary systems & endings. homework — major impact which is dominating life.
	671	previously looked after don't you'. You do know that that's what I mean when I talk	
	672	about pupil premium, because all the documentation, I started to use words like	
	673	disadvantaged, which course she isn't really, well she is and she isn't, but I know that	
	674	they talk about the disadvantaged groups like we had, and I know that she'll fall in that	
	675	and I think- sometimes you have to use the language that makes the flags go up. <u>I just</u>	
	676	wanna call her *CHILD'S NAME*, but yeah.	
	677	I: Is there anything else that you think I should know or we should talk about?	
	678	P: Mm, no. I told you about the primary transition group 'cos there wasn't a natural	
	679	question about the ending at primary, said about the homework which is a big thing.	
	680	I: You've kind of covered all the things that I had in one way or another.	
	681	P: Yeah, yeah, I don't think so, yeah.	
	682	I: Okay, super, that is it.	

683	P: Thank you.	
684	I: So thank you.	

Debrief information was provided to the participant. The participant was thanked for their involvement and reminded what will happen next with the information they provided as well as the right to withdraw. Participants were also signposted to possible sources of support if they felt emotional following the interview.

Appendix 25: Tables of all superordinate themes and subthemes for each participant

Participant 1: Emma (Year 7)

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Keywords
1. Anxiety		
Practical challenges	85-87, 386-388	Find anything, where anything was
Safety and vulnerability	3-4, 6-7, 9-10. 401-404	Huuugee, scared, thousands of people, squished, so small
Social belonging	79-80, 142-146	Have to make new friends, scared people will say no
Teachers	298-300, 302-304, 391-392	Shout, scream at you, tell you off
Change and loss	69-70, 407, 409-411	Moving house, go right down to the lowest, sad
2. Managing the self		
Familiarity as reducing anxiety	70-72, 162-165, 176-177, 222-226, 341-342	I knew, I would know the school a bit better, pictures of like the names of the teachers so you knew who they were
Staff as a source of containment	42-45, 308-310, 327-333, 393-395, 450-452	Talk to me, tries to help, tell you what to do, just ask, worried, if you're sad
Individual resilience	80-81, 96-97, 193-195, 207-210, 427	Moved around quite a lot, good at making friends, learn myself, write it down, get used to it
3. New opportunities		
Growing-up	104-109, 115-123, 129-135, 193-195, 350-351	Choose the meal, don't argue like in primary, won't

Social belonging and friendships	146-151, 341-344	ask, learn myself, varied food, pizza Friends with, new friends, know who they are
4. Experience of being adopted		
Identity and difference	23-24, 232-234, 461-462, 465-467, 469-471	Children who are adopted don't act normally, told the teachers I was adopted, too much attention
Disclosure as a means to support	34, 36-39, 237-238	Help you, they would know how to support me, help or not
Understanding and acceptance	241-244, 442-443, 455-458	Wouldn't put me in assemblies, took me out, if they didn't know

Participant 2: Violet (Year 7)

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Keywords
1. Anxiety		
Safety and vulnerability	23-24, 28-31, 48-49, 65-66, 85-86, 189, 357, 364-365, 372-373	Physically pushed, towering over you, not very like strong, being intimidating, nice or horrible, smallest, bigger students, older kids you're now the youngest
Social belonging	57-59, 384	I want to go back to my old school and see all of my friends, where do I fit in
Teaching and learning	76-77, 114-117, 379	Some of the questions and answers and stuff are really like tricky, teachers being less shouty
2. Change and opportunity		
Moving on	3-6, 15-17, 62-63, 73-75, 352-354	Don't want to leave your friends, nice to have new people in your life, meet new people, forget about your other friends, massive step, amazing, new chapter like of your life
New opportunities for learning	169-171, 385-387, 389-394	Better experiences at school, different lessons, more creative, exciting
Change in the role of the teacher	148-150, 156-157, 231-234, 329-331, 433-438	Gives you advice, I know you're having a really bad day today but get in the right order
Preparation and resilience	109-110, 120-122, 179-180, 199-200	You get used to it, I was fine with that, can't remember, not really

3. Relationships with peers		
Identity and difference	184-186, 257-261, 274, 276-277, 279-281, 284-285, 288-290, 302-303, 307, 309, 311-313, 315-316, 329-331	Odd one out, say weird stuff about people being adopted, oh I don't like you, you're adopted, no one would make a big big deal out of it
Friends as a protective factor	38-41, 49-51, 88-90, 98-102, 133-136, 341-344, 376-377, 407-409	Finding people, they like help you, with you, could go to, one of my friends actually had a huge go at the person
Belonging amongst peers	43, 69, 88-90, 160-162	Where's all our friends, they're with you, I have lots and lots of friends, if I hadn't gone to school I wouldn't have met you guys

Participant 3: Daniel (Year 7)

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Keywords
1. Anxiety		
Teaching and learning	23-27, 120-123, 155-156	Afraid to ask him a question, shouted, really strict
Safety and vulnerability	8-9, 52-53, 59-60, 67-69, 71-72, 97-102, 110-111	Scarier, older people, a lot more people, taller, moodier, scary and it made me feel small, gangs, huddle
2. Change and loss		
New opportunities for learning	3-5, 8, 12-14	Mostly excited because of all the new lessons I get to have, I entered on woodwork, I got to have my first experience of maths, Spanish
Loss of nurture	23, 26-27, 82-84, 157-158, 174-176	Strict, scared to ask questions, don't really get involved with the children, in primary everyone was really kind and jolly, they would help you a lot more, just trying to do his job
Expectations of independence	43, 131-132, 231-232	Getting more exercise in your legs, once you're out, obviously now we're in secondary school they expect us to be more independent, we didn't get a lot of help
Preparation and resilience	53-55, 125-128, 206-207, 213-214, 231-232	Didn't really do a lot, you have those transitions, one or two more would have helped, you can just keep walking around and you'll eventually find your way out, try my best and

		then ask my friends
3. Relationships		
Teachers as a source of academic support and containment	113-117, 144-147, 161-165, 192-196	Help you and catch you up, we were having a chat about it, know that you still need that extra support, they'll always help you out, she's really understanding
Social relationships as difficult	74-76, 82-84, 90-91	Like different because you don't know them and they don't really talk a lot, you don't really get to know people easy, not one of those people that's the best at making friends
4. Identity and belonging		
Developing a new identity	32-33, 42-43, 234-235, 240	My uniform made me feel like a complete different person, now I'm at secondary, lead student of year 7, voice of the people
Adoption as part of identity	132, 154, 157-158, 217-218, 291, 294-295, 297-298, 323	Doesn't know a lot about our backgrounds, what we've actually been through, they would understand that I am adopted
Identity and difference	145-147, 149, 161-165, 181-185, 209-210	At the end of the lesson luckily, they would know that you still need that extra support just not as much but you can still do a lot on yourself independently, don't want to obviously embarrass the child

Participant 4: Anne (Parent)

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Keywords
1. Opportunities and threats		
Fresh start	100, 191-195, 288-290, 649-652, 665	Be in a school without her sister, world of good, feel happy in her own skin, have a bit more confidence, place in the world
Labelling of child	158-160, 203-206, 246-249, 303-308, 320-323, 334-336	Bit uneasy about, put all the pupil premium kids...all in one form, guts me, her identity she felt stolen, odd way of socially engineering a population, seen as they're part of the problem form, dumped in one area
Safety and vulnerability	57-64, 670-671	Scared of groups of people, flinches, not liked the noise at all, not wanting to go to school
Disappointment in the primary school	695-699, 721-724, 730-731	Not really enough, don't think they really got it, wasn't a consideration, weren't clued up
Homework as the biggest challenge	343-344, 349-352	Homework has been our biggest challenge, home is home, black and white
2. Work of managing the self		
Professional identity as a source of knowledge and resilience	41-43, 70-72, 78-80, 304-305, 316-317, 347-348	From my professional experience, we tried to get her to come into my school so she got to see it a little bit more, I felt I knew as a secondary school teacher myself, I'm

Child's response as reassuring	41-42, 498-499	the designated teacher at my school She dealt with it I think a lot better than a lot of other kids who haven't had her experience, she'll be fine
Knowledge that child has support in school	43-44, 73-75, 490-494, 674-676	It helped that a friend of ours works at the school, they could go together, we all rely quite heavily on our friend, her safe place in her classroom, lucky in that respect,
Opportunity to be a parent expert	24-26, 28-29, 32-38, 80-89, 170-183, 211-217, 295-296	Spoke to their pastoral lead, they were great, made sure she was booked in, gave us some time and listened, we were the experts, weren't being a pest, emailed in, good as gold, got absolute confidence in the school
A school that can meet the child's needs	6-10, 17, 185-187, 239-240, 273-277, 744-746	Nice family feel, flexibility and understanding, it felt like they cared, tried to get her involved with things, smaller secondary schools, summer school

Participant 5: Jessica (Parent)

Superordinate and subordinate themes	Transcript line numbers	Keywords
1. Anxiety vs. excitement		
Expectations of transition	3-6, 54-55, 82-85, 110, 204-205, 255-257	I know transition is difficult, she would cope, nervous as I was, thought she would lag behind more
Worries around child's independence	16-17, 39-43, 125-128	Long way, rough, gets the bus home, lose everything, get lost
Hopes for child's relationships and belonging	19-20, 24-34, 72, 118-122, 246-255, 453-454, 480-483	Please she's making friends, worried because she didn't know anyone, billy no mates
Excitement and opportunity	131-132, 166-168, 175-176	Wanted her to leave, ready for her to go, rite of passage, excited
2. The psychological impact of starting secondary school		
Surprise at child's response	35-36, 45-47, 106-108, 128-131, 179-181, 192-193, 207, 476-479, 507	Actually it didn't seem to have had an impact at all, not as much as I thought, she's actually coped, absolute first, made her grow up a little bit, she's actually managed that
Disappointment	106-108, 114-115	Such a non-event, wasn't as dramatic
Loss of child	137-140, 155-164, 655-656	Painful, bitter sweet, first is your last
Impacts on the whole family	212-217, 224-227, 609-610, 628-631, 660-663, 675-676	Head banging, intense, dominates our entire weekend, real slog, they're tiring kids, exhausted more layers, more

		complexity, off-road parenting
3. Self and identity		
Conflict between the parental and professional self	300-302, 392-393, 414-415, 421-422, 564-566, 585-592	Throw my weight around, impressed with this professionally, power play, twonk, you're an EP you should know what the matter is with your child
Professional identity as a source of knowledge and resilience	209-211, 225, 232-235, 471, 643-644	A girl on the spectrum, does do a lot of masking, being a psychologist, didn't do the jobs we do
Adoptive parenting as a job role	225-227, 236-239, 408-413, 424-427, 557-558, 601-606, 613-615	We've tried everything, micromanaged, friendly nuisance, pain in the arse, it's not our job
Work of managing the self	122-124, 244-245, 276-280, 370-371, 446-449, 474-476, 484-485, 523-526	I asked for this girl she knew, random checks, get the information from the source, she seems ok so I'm ok, cycle for me, reassured
Excessive rumination of self and decisions	118-119, 146-148, 277-279, 469, 505-506, 622-624, 640-651	I guess that says more about me than her, like I did, not one of those parents, where have we chosen, spent a lot of time naval gazing
4. Self and school		
Disconnected and let down	61-64, 79-80, 86, 268-271, 333-335, 349-352, 361-363, 366-369, 395-400, 403, 413, 427-431, 450-452, 556, 635-636	We've not had a parent's evening, no contact, remote, I don't know what they do, not heard anything, had no dealings with them
Not able to be a parent expert	220-221, 386-388, 400-401, 415-418, 593-595	Never believed, should have been in touch with me, reached out a bit more

Drive and battle to ensure adoption is recognised	261, 284, 295-296, 374-375, 408-413, 576-582, 598-600, 617-618, 668-676	Just don't get it, banging on a very firmly locked door, ask for a meeting, do a lot of the driving, put the flea in someone's ear, make the flags go up
Centrality of relationships to secondary experience	260-262, 311-317, 359, 415-418, 487-491, 596-598	Excuse me while I spit my coffee everywhere, don't like the woman, power and control issues, continuation of the same relationship
Communication from school as fulfilling a need to be involved	86-91, 302-308, 510-516, 530-532, 539-544	Tweets, ethos, helpful, responsive, at least you're not left completely in the dark, gives you an insight

Appendix 26: Extracts from the research diary

20th December 2019

Final child interview — learning from my previous two child interviews, I tried really hard to ask qns and probe further in order to gather information on feelings, thoughts and experiences. Nonetheless, the information I gathered was still rather surface level and descriptive as opposed to reflective. I therefore wonder whether the questions were not enough to elicit rich IPA data or whether IPA is not an appropriate method for cyp who are young and ~~are~~ find it difficult to reflect on their thoughts and feelings. Thematic analysis would probably more appropriate for the data or having older cyp participants who are better able to reflect. Because of all of this, much of the interview is me talking. As the child was nervous and found some qns difficult to answer, I tried to scaffold her. However, I was conscious that my scaffolding may have been a bit


leading at times. I also find it hard not to put two qns together at once. It's clear though that sometimes they want to speak about something which is important to them, like a cat dying, and sometimes you just have to go with that! You interpret that as a challenge & then ask qns to confirm that and evoke feelings. I know I had some preconceived ideas from previous knowledge, literature & previous interview & it's hard not to let these carry over! Pretty sure I didn't get detailed enough in this interview but I will make do. & I feel there's nothing else I could have done

20th December 2019

Final parent interview — this was the one I was most nervous about because I already knew the parent as an ~~of~~ colleague within the service. For this

reason, a dual relationship was at play of 2 colleagues (ITP, 1 senior GP) and of an interviewer and ~~and~~ a participant. Our pre existing relationship, whilst not a strong one, could have affected our interaction, both in the questions I asked or how I phrased them as well as in how she responded. Also she is a senior GP for LAC & post LAC and an EP so ~~so~~ not only did she know the subject area but she also knows what questions I should be asking, especially for IPA. I tried not to let this affect me and I was up front from the start about how nervous I was. Taking little notes of things to come back to really helped with this one and I think it had a good flow. However, I spent so much time thinking about what question to ask next & I was so preoccupied with myself that I struggled to truly listen. Nevertheless, my questions did get her to think about things she hadn't considered before which

was definitely a success. Overall I think it was okay and I think I got some good data. It's so hard not to become self absorbed and I definitely need a lot more practice to become absorbed in the interview and ask good follow up qns that don't lead or interpret in that moment. But all interviews done so, now the hard work really begins! ¹



School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Neil Rees

SUPERVISOR: Mary Robinson

STUDENT: Abigail Fayers

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Title of proposed study: The experience of transition from primary to secondary school from the perspectives of adopted children and their adoptive parents with a focus on the factors which supported this transition

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH

COMMENCES

Minor amendments required (for reviewer):

Very minor:

I'm not sure why all participant information sheets were provided in the appendices apart from the information sheet for Year 7 participants and their parents. From an ethical point of view, this is probably the most important participant information sheet.

You say that the debrief letter for parents participating in the focus group will include links to adoption charities but the letter in the appendices does not contain these links.

Just a suggestion - from my experience young people consultants appreciate receiving a certificate or something similar to acknowledge their contribution and role.

Major amendments required (for reviewer):

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments (for students):

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name (*Typed name to act as signature*): Abigail Fayers

Student number: u1724877

Date: 10.05.2019

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER (for reviewer)

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐

HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☒

LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

Reviewer: Neil Rees

Date: 29.04.19

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix 28: UEL ethics approval for change of title



University of East London Psychology

REQUEST FOR TITLE CHANGE TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for proposed title change to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology.

By applying for a change of title request you confirm that in doing so the process by which you have collected your data/conducted your research has not changed or deviated from your original ethics approval. If either of these have changed then you are required to complete an Ethics Amendments Form.

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

1. Complete the request form electronically and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).
3. Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: Psychology.Ethics@uel.ac.uk
4. Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer's response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your project/dissertation/thesis.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.

Name of applicant:	Abigail Fayers
Programme of study:	Professional Doctorate in Educational & Child Psychology
Name of supervisor:	Mary Robinson

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed title change in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	Rationale
Old Title: The experience of transition from primary to secondary school from the perspectives of adopted children and their adoptive parents with a focus on the factors which supported this transition.	The data gathered focused more on the experience of starting secondary school compared to the transition specifically. To shorten the title
New Title: Starting secondary school: the experiences of adopted young people and their parents.	

Please tick	YES	NO
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	X	
Does your change of title impact the process of how you collected your data/conducted your research?		X

Student's signature (please type your name): Abigail Fayers

Date: 07/04/2020

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Title changes approved	APPROVED	
Comments		

Reviewer: Glen Rooney

Date: 16/04/2020



UEL Data Management Plan: Lite

For PGRs to submit to PhD Manager prior to Examination

This 'lite' DMP is written at project completion stating what will happen to your research data: if you already have a DMP from earlier in your project you do not need to complete this form.

Plans must be sent to researchdata@uel.ac.uk for review.

Research data is defined as information or material captured or created during the course of research, and which underpins, tests, or validates the content of the final research output. It is often empirical or statistical, but also includes material such as drafts, prototypes, and multimedia objects that underpin creative or 'non-traditional' outputs.

Administrative Data		
Researcher	Name: Abigail Fayers	
	Email: u1724877@uel.ac.uk	ORCID: N/A
Research title and description	Title: Starting secondary school: the experiences of adopted young people and their parents. Description: This a qualitative piece of research which explores the experience of starting secondary school from the perspectives of adopted children in Year 7 and adoptive parents. The research was designed in collaboration with adoptive children currently in Year 9 or 10.	
Research Duration dd/mm/yy	Start date: 29/04/2019	End date: July 2020
Ethics application reference	See attached	

Funder	N/A				
Date of DMP	First version: 23/02/2020		Last update: 20/04/2020		
Related Policies	e.g. Research Data Management Policy Local Authority Ethical Considerations when undertaking research.				
About your Data					
What data have you collected and where is it stored?	Data type	Format	Volume	Storage location	Back up location
	Anonymised transcripts	.docx	270KB	On a personal password protected laptop. This laptop is stored in a bag in the researcher's home. Each transcript is encrypted with a password known only to the researcher.	On a personal encrypted USB drive. This USB drive is stored in a draw in the researcher's home.
	Session plan for work with Year 9/10 research consultants	.docx	27KB	On a personal password protected laptop. This laptop is stored in a bag in the researcher's home. The session plan is encrypted	On a personal encrypted USB drive. This USB drive is stored in a draw in the researcher's home.

				with a password known only to the researcher.	
	Consent forms from participants	.docx	2.37MB	UEL OneDrive for Business	UEL H: Drive
	Audio files recorded during interviews	.WAV	422MB	UEL OneDrive for Business	UEL H: Drive
	Which data (if any) is personal or sensitive?				
	Consent forms from participants contain personal information.				
	Audio files recorded during interviews contain personal identifiers.				
	Pseudo-anonymisation has been undertaken on the interview transcripts and all personal details have been removed. Due to the small number of interviews (6), true anonymisation is not possible as the researcher is able to identify the individuals from the data gathered.				
	Consent forms and anonymised transcripts are stored separately to ensure greater anonymisation of the data.				
Documentation and Metadata					
What documentation and metadata accompanies the data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participant information sheets for Year 7 participants and their parents• Participant information sheets for adoptive parent participants• Information sheets for Year 9/10 research consultants and their parents• Blank consent forms for all the above• Session plan for work with Year 9/10 research consultants• Interview schedules for interviews with Year 7 participants and adoptive parent participants• Digital voice recorder to record interviews with Year 7 participants and adoptive parent participants• Debrief forms for Year 9/10 research consultants				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief forms for Year 7 participants • Debrief forms for adoptive parent participants • Anonymised transcripts annotated with hand-written initial reflections, comments and themes generated during the process of data analysis (interpretative phenomenological analysis procedure used for data analysis) • Data-management plan Lite • Research diary containing reflections on research process • File-naming convention – separate folders for blank information sheets and consent forms and for anonymised transcripts; naming for transcripts – e.g. Anonymised Transcript 1 Parent Participant; Anonymised Transcript 4 – Year 7 Participant
Data Sharing	
<p>Other researchers may be interested in your data: can you share on UEL's repository?</p>	<p>Anonymised transcripts, including those annotated during the data analysis phase will be shared with the research supervisor and other university-based professionals involved in the researcher's VIVA examination.</p> <p>Thesis will be shared on UEL repository and will include samples of anonymised annotated transcripts.</p> <p>Participant information sheets and consent forms state that all personal information, including audio files, will be deleted following completion of the research and the researcher's professional qualification in July 2020. This data therefore cannot be shared.</p>
Data Retention	
<p>Which data are of long-term value and should be kept?</p>	<p>As stated in the participant information sheets and consent forms, completed consent forms and audio files will be stored in the locations mentioned above until completion of the research and professional qualification in July 2020. Following completion of the research, completed consent forms and audio files will be destroyed. To ensure data is deleted, software will be used to securely wipe any necessary files.</p> <p>All anonymised annotated transcripts will be stored in the locations mentioned above until completion of the research and professional qualification in July 2020. Following completion of the research, all anonymised transcripts will be destroyed, except for those included within the Thesis published on the UEL repository. To ensure data is deleted, software will be used to securely wipe any</p>

	<p>necessary files.</p> <p>The session plan for work with Year 9/10 research consultants will be retained in case of future research. This retained document will be stored as an open format to ensure longer term preservation and accessibility (plain text, RTF, instead of Word documents).</p> <p>Any data to be retained at the end of the research will be reviewed every 5 years in line with the Research Data Management Policy for UEL.</p>
Review	Please send your plan to researchdata@uel.ac.uk
Date: 20/04/2020	<p>Reviewer name: Penny Jackson</p> <p>Research Data Management Officer</p>